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THE
LAST DAYS OF DISERTH.

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

In liquid gold the sun still sets ;
The moon still climbs the midnight sky ;
Nor Hesperus the earth forgets,
Still countless stars are hung on high ;
And rivers ripple, oceans swell,
And zephyrs sigh, and tempests roar,
And wild flowers deck the hidden dell,
As gaily as in days of yore :
Then shall these themes remain unsung ?
Is ev'ry British harp unstrung ?
And must we turn to earlier lays,
To learn who struck in nature's praise ?
Are eyes no longer bright and sparkling,
With depth of passion flashing, darkling ?
Are ears all deaf to harmony,
And can the power of minstrelsy
Wake no more in the human breast
The feeling in the theme expressed ?
Are hearts all cold ! is love unknown,
Lip meeting lip excite no thrilling ?
Is there no fervour in the tone,
Which tells of joy all hope fulfilling ?

Has grief exhausted ev'ry tear?
Has sympathy for ever fled?
Are home and country no more dear?
Are honour, virtue, valour, dead?
Forbid it heaven! the human breast
Still beats and throbs with fervour heated,
Upon the soul is still impressed
Exhaustless passion deeply seated.
Then why not wake the song again?
With hand unshrinking strike the wire!
Love, honour, valour, be the strain
Breath'd forth, in fearless words of fire.
Strike boldly! and a thousand hearts
Leap with the echo, as when starts
Beneath the down press'd iv'ry key,
The gushing, thrilling melody.
Strike gaily! and a thousand eyes
Will sparkle with new ecstacies,
And fairy forms will hang upon
The ling'ring of each dying tone,
And drink the soul awak'ning words,
Expiring in harmonic chords.

The nightless north sees gaily streaming
The blood-red banner o'er its seas;
The cannon's lightning bright is gleaming,
Its dense smoke rolls on ev'ry breeze.
The Gallic eagle spreads its wing,
For France has listened to the cry;

Swift to the rescue boldly spring
The worshippers of liberty :
The Bothnian echoes now repeat
The mingled tones of either tongue,
Borne from the brethren of each fleet,
Who've sworn to right a nation's wrong.
Beneath the southern cloudless skies,
With but one heart, one thought, one feeling,
March the unconquerable Allies,
Where the artillery is pealing ;
And patriot sons their gore are spilling,
By hundreds falling in the breach,
Their noble destiny fulfilling
In deeds more audible than speech.
The coward fights for home and life—
Who will not struggle for his own,
When country, parent, child, and wife,
Are all into the balance thrown ?
When all are heroes, and each breast
These holy aspirations fire,
Freedom shall crown the warrior's rest,
And tyranny in groans expire.

Hark ! o'er the dark and land-locked sea,
A piteous wail is sadly sweeping,
Like the half spoken agony,
The which the stifled breast is keeping ;
When ev'ry thrilling hope and pleasure,
The darksome doom of fate has crush'd,

And perish'd is each earthly treasure,
And from the soul each joy that gush'd.
Hark to the cry ! it comes, it comes,
Each billow lifts it from the sea ;
It rises from the wat'ry tombs
Where sank the murder'd and the free.
It comes ! it comes ! in tones avenging,
Blood is the chorus of the theme,
On those who, honour's laws infringing,
Shrink not their Maker to blaspheme.
It comes ! it comes ! the wild breeze bears it
With fearful clearness loudly ringing,
The sceptred tyrant trembling hears it,
E'en in the mass his priests are singing ;
'Tis spreading on each rushing blast,
It whistles round each shroud and mast
Of those brave bulwarks of the right
Which soon shall bear the conquerors on,
The outraged nation to requite,
And blood with seas of blood t' atone.
Louder, still louder doth it rise—
Echo the burden multiplies ;
'Tis borne unto the list'ning skies ;
Upward, still upward wings it—even
'Tis heard and answer'd now from heav'n.

He, who the scabbard threw away,
Th' unrighteous author of the fray,
Who may have deem'd on earth he trod,
A mighty, fearful demi-god,

Shall learn that virtue liveth yet—
In human hearts hath still a seat ;
That justice has not ceased to be
A spring of action with the free :
This know in dire defeat and shame,
E'en branded with a felon's name,
That scorner of each noble tie,
Which still restrains humanity.
Ye brave Allies ! strike home, strike home !
Your swords shall deal a righteous doom—
Ye fight before earth's myriad eyes,
Truth, Justice, are your witnesses ;
With a hush'd awe the world looks on,
To bless you when your task is won.
Won—when the modern Tamerlane
Within the frozen north ye chain ;
Then 'mid his icy dungeons, there.
Let him blaspheme in wild despair,
And as his manacles he gnaws,
He then shall feel, to outrage laws,
Which nations, men, and monarchs own,
Is but to spring the mine whereon
Is raised his tott'ring, tyrant throne.

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Farewell unto this noble theme,
Mine is a feebler song ;
Like some poor taper's trembling beam,
The cloistered aisles among,
Compared with what the strain should be,
When mightiest nations snatch the shield,

And raise the gage of tyranny,
For freedom's cause their faulchions wield.
Though none may listen as I sing,
Or coldly hear this strain of mine ;
Yet round the harp I rudely ring,
Erst while did bay-leaves twine.
But they are withered, withered all,
Not one remains for me,
Yet snatch I mould'ring from the wall,
That lyre once tuned to melody :
Its notes are weak, its strings are worn,
Its very echoes sound forlorn,
But yet in mem'ry of the past
I'll strike, though this song be the last.

THE LAST DAYS OF DISERTH.

CANTO THE FIRST.

The pine knots blazed in Powys Hall,
Illumining the festival—
The massive tables groaned beneath
The stores of flood, and plain and heath,
Mead and metheglin circled round,
And horsemen, footmen, none were found
Who shunn'd the bowl, which, flowing free,
Heightened the joyous revelry.
Upon the walls the armour hung,
Now gaily ever backward flung,
Like mirrors to the banquet's night,
From polished helm and cuirass bright,
The cheerful fire's ruddy blaze,
With ever-varying brilliant rays.
And antlers wide and grim wolf's head,
Which, though all power to harm was fled,
Grinn'd savagely, as if in strife
It sought to win again its life ;
And other trophies of the chase,
The ancient hall did fitly grace.

The hunting-spear, the feathered shaft,
The keen-edged knife with buck-horn haft,
The slacken'd bow, and bells' and hood
Of falcons swift—of which one stood,
Or rather perch'd, a favour'd bird
(Of Griffith's, now the castle's lord)
Upon the rafters undisturb'd.
And there were ancient dinted blades—
If speech were theirs, of what wild raids
Could they not sing, and well relate
Full many a gallant foeman's fate—
And battered helmets, hacked and hewed
In many a valiant border feud :
With horses' trappings, some were worn,
And some moth-eaten, others torn ;
Light tilting lance, and gay surtout,
Decked the old gray walls, not a few ;
All that betoken'd war or chase,
In Poole's old Hall had found a place.

The festive board now claims our care,
With those who sat and revell'd there.
Griffith ap Gwynwynwyn, the lord
Of princely Powys, at the board
Presided o'er the feast, and he
Shunn'd not the joyous revelry.
Defensive armour wore he none,
The helmet and habergeon
Were laid aside, but round his waist
A leather belt was tightly braced,

From which a dagger hung, whose steel
Now served to carve the evening meal.
Beside his Lord, upon the floor,
A favour'd menial sat, who bore
His chieftain's feet upon his breast,
The custom of the feudal feast.
And no disgrace was it to be
The foot-bearer, and mostly he
Who fill'd this lot could proudly claim
A fosterbrother's gentle name.

Griffith some two score years had seen,
His iron frame had often been
Severely tried in war and storm,
Which served to steel his stalwart form.
As some dark rock upon the coast,
Where boiling surf has beaten most,
Though rugged here, and dinted there,
Can best withstand the tempest's wear,
So he, though not unmarked by time,
Was now in vigorous manhood's prime :
His sinewy limbs, his brawny chest,
And noble height, at once impress'd
Beholders that a giant's might
Was his who ruled the festal night ;
His dark brown hair was ting'd with gray,
And o'er the temples worn away
By helmet's pressure, day by day ;
And wrinkles deep from side to side
Were drawn across his forehead wide ;

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And his left cheek, extending far,
Was dinted by a deep white scar,
Received in bloody border war.
His ever wand'ring hazel eye
Beam'd with the look of majesty ;
Bright glancing in his hour of wrath,
Like comet in its fiery path,
But when the fitful storm passed by,
It shone with mild benignity.
Yet oft when mirth possessed the hour,
Across his features dark would lour
A gloom forbidding, sad, and drear,
As if remorse or coward fear
Were struggling in that hour to win
His soul. None knew the sin,
Or priest, or friend—the weight alone
He bore; his secret was his own.
Then with an effort he would cast
The thought away ; the influence past,
No one was gayer then than he,
More boisterous 'mid festivity.
Ambition ! soul-inspiring name,
A spark of an eternal flame,
Which fires the breast with fervent hope,
And if restrain'd in righteous scope
No nobler sentiment can rest
Within, or fire the ardent breast.
Our fathers' souls ambition warm'd,
Its images their day-dreams charm'd,

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Prompting the sons to emulate
Than their forbears a nobler state ;
And thus the centre it became,
Whence sprung the varied roads to fame ;
And science, art, from swathe-clothes burst,
By just ambition fondly nursed,
Still bids it,—press on—onward—on—
Till mankind's final goal is won :
But o'er ambition's picture yet
A shade will steal, none can forget.
That from the earliest days of time
Its curse hath prompted ev'ry crime !
More death, more misery, more woe,
More torture, horror, here below,
Ambition ! thou to man hast given,
Than every passion under heaven.
Thy image hath been bathed in gore,
Thy altars have been drown'd in blood,
And moans concentratèd would roar,
A tempest o'er th' ensanguin'd flood.
Could we together catch the cries,
And hear the dying agonies
Of those who in thy cause e'er fell,
And made the smiling earth a hell.
Let hist'ry build thy temple's fane,
It is a mountain chain of slain ;
But on thy altars those shall bleed,
The sacrificial flame to feed,
Who long have worshipped at thy shrine,
And fondly hailed thee, all divine !

When justice shall assert her rights,
The heroes of ambitious fights,
Lords, princes, monarchs, emperors—all—
All who have worshipped there shall fall,
Ere yet the power of peace shall sweep
Thy name into oblivion's deep.
Ambition was Lord Griffith's bane—
Oft had he struggled, but in vain,
To quell the demon which still held
Him prisoner, and his virtues quell'd.
A traitor to his native land,
His treachery ambition fann'd,
But still within his bosom dwelt
Compassion for the harassed Celt,
And 'gainst his heart of hearts 'twould jar
To aid the Normans in the war.

Beside him sat his only son,
Beloved as is an only one;
His slender form of middle height,
His curling locks as dark as night,
And face almost as woman's fair
Contrasted with his ebon hair;
His chisell'd features faultless were,
No sculptor's greatest skill or care
A face more faultless could design
Than his—last scion of his line.
And that which sculpture's power defies,
His beaming, glancing, coal black eyes,
Like jewels in th' illumined night,

But so expressive, and more bright—
As when the clouds o'er heaven straying
Of ebon hue, and there is playing
No ray of starlight, moonlight pure,
From boundless fields of deep azure,
A sudden cleft divides the veil,
Then the soft streaming moonbeams pale
Burst through the shadowy curtain riven,
As from th' unfathomed wells of heaven,
And brighter seem, like diamonds set
In a surrounding field of jet.
Thus to his eyes his pure thoughts rose,
Thus burst they on the gaze of those
Who saw in rays of light defined
The secret workings of his mind.

Oh sing of beauty, give to me
The features formed as if by art—
Yes, perfected in symmetry—
Then let expression do its part,
And beautify the beauteous whole,
And give to sculptured grace the soul.
Call that not loveliness of face,
Where sweet expression shines alone,
Where features are devoid of grace,
It but for plainness doth atone;
As 'mid the storm a sunbeam's ray,
Pale glimmering where the lightnings play,
Cannot make nature fair and clear,
But the wild tempest still more drear.

Oh how the mother loved her son,
Owain, her treasured only one.
All that within her bosom glowed—
All that within her warm heart flowed—
That which a mother can but know
Of that deep, all-absorbing glow
Of love maternal, which doth spring
E'en from the soul, and round doth fling
Its hallowing ever deep'ning feeling
Through heart, and mind, and bosom stealing,
Was hers her son to fling around
With Fervour lasting and profound.
And can a mother love but one—
Thus fondly cherish one alone?
No! every child her heart may share,
And know alike her love and care;
But when like blossoms from the trees,
Which fall before the murmuring breeze,
They one by one on earth are lying,
And one by one are sadly dying,
Till but the last is left to bloom—
The others withered in the tomb—
Then does she love as one, the last?
When all beside sleep with the past?
Nay; all the passion of her breast,
Fondly divided with the rest,
A warm flood mingled gushes forth
Upon her last loved tie on earth.

“ Fill the deep Hirlas horn ! fill high ! ”
Was Griffith’s now exulting cry.
The horn with sparkling mead runs o’er—
Steadily to his lips he bore
The generous liquor—at one draught,
And only one, ’tis fairly quaffed ;
And then the jovial feast to crown,
The lordly horn is clearly blown ;
Loudly it rang throughout the hall,
The warders heard it on the wall,
Who, starting, deem’d at first the sound
Some foeman at the gate had wound,
Then at their false alarm they smiled,
While rang again its music wild.—
“ Fill high the ‘ Hirlas horn ! ’ fill high !
Another’s lips shall drain it dry.”
’Tis fill’d, and then unto his Bard,
The sparkling mead bore Powys’ Lord :
“ Behold the horn, with silver tipp’d—
By no mean dribbler be it sipp’d ! ”
He cried. “ Cyfesliog, quaff its flood—
’Twill warm thy soul—’twill fire thy blood—
It will inspire thy fervent brain,
And aid thee wake the battle’s strain.”
Never the noble bard refrained
Such proffer’d draught—again is drain’d
The “ Hirlas horn : ”—with sparkling eye,
The Bard awakes his minstrelsy.

The Fall of Bauzan.

“On Towy’s banks the steeds are prancing;
In Towy’s flood the spears are glancing;
And Towy’s echoes bear the neigh
Of bold war-horse and trumpet’s bray.
Fierce Stephen Bauzan heads the van,
And many a noble partizan
In glitt’ring mail their steeds bestride,
’Neath banners floating in their pride.
Their swords are sharp, their lances keen,
And haughty is each warrior’s mien,
As on the genial summer’s morn,
Their foe, the Welch, they laugh to scorn.
They ravaged Ystrad Towy’s plains,

The smoking hamlets marked their path
With all that border warfare stains,

Fierce cruelty and savage wrath!
Still on! The Welch retreat before,
They gain at length Llandile Vawr;
And when their bloody work was done
The evening shades were hastening on.
The watch is set—the watch-fires glow—

The horse are picketted around—
The ruddy cup they circle now,

But while they drink, a murm’ring sound
Floats softly ’neath the midnight skies,
Deep’ning like moans—now sad, like sighs,
And then along the wooded vale,
Swept the soft, piteous, gentle wail.

Was it the wind which swept alone
O'er upland moor and dark gray stone?
Was it the river which rippling fell
O'er rocky beds, through wooded dell?
Or was it thus the woodland fays
Mingled their voices with the flood,
And thus together tun'd their lays
In mourning for the deeds of blood
Which unavenged upon the sod,
And tinging deep the rippling waves,
Cried out for vengeance unto God,
For those who slept in unknown graves?
What those unspoken voices were
None knew, but that mysterious air
Fell like a warning on the foe—
Each warrior cross'd his vizor'd brow,
Murmur'd an ave, or breathed a vow.

“The night passed on: with morning's light
The Normans mount their barbèd steeds,
Firmly they grasp'd their lances bright,
Which seemed a forest dense of reeds.
Four thousand warriors, steel clad men,
All confident of victory,
Through mountain pass and darksome glen,
Where the wild Welch in numbers lie,
In bold defiance of their powers,
Press on to Abertievy's towers,
Arm'd with contempt they march'd along,
Nor dream'd that in the battle's throng

The hated and despis'd Kymry,
Could tame their boasted chivalry.
With trumpet's note and clarions shrill,
Which woke the echoes of the hill,
Gay pennons floating in the breeze,
Bright helmets glancing 'mid the trees,
And not a foeman to be seen—
But many a searching glance and keen,
From bush and briar, of wary scout,
As they swept by, peep'd gently out;
For Owain had a thousand eyes—
Each wood and dell was fill'd with spies.

“Now, press'd within a narrow vale,
Each haughty leader's cheek grows pale :
They saw the rocks, which round them rose,
Might form a shelter for their foes,
When loud throughout the dell there rang,
Not the soul-stirring trumpet's clang,
Which ev'ry warrior doth inspire,
And feeds the flame of martial fire,
But louder, wilder, fiercer far
Than clarion's brazen note of war
Was that wild awe-inspiring yell,
Which woke the echoes of the dell.
There was in that exulting cry
The tone assured of victory,
The note triumphant of revenge,
Of those who soon can well avenge

Unnumber'd wrongs, unnumber'd ills,
Heap'd higher than their native hills.
The Normans trembled, for they felt
No mercy from the harass'd Celt
Would they receive, and cursed the hour,
That placed them in the Kymry's power.

“They sternly gazed, but saw no foe—
No Celt on whom to strike a blow ;
But every rock and greenwood fell
Seem'd vocal, for again that yell,
With its wild, fearful, dread refrain,
Burst on their deafened ears again.
And spears and arrows now were thrown ;
From rock to rock, from stone to stone,
With bounding step like startled deer,
Sprang many a hundred mountaineer,
Hov'ring o'er van, or centre, rear,
Show'ring their missiles far and near—
That death hail unremitting pour'd,
And vaunted mail of Norman lord
Was quickly, deeply pierced, and those
Fell first who most despised their foes.
The Normans raged, but raged in vain ;
Cursing they fell beneath that rain,
Which fiercely pour'd with deadly force—
Roll'd on the ground both man and horse :
And those who sank ne'er rose again,
For some were smothered, others slain.

On press'd the knights, through wood and pass,
But (there were many) each morass
Which spread across their mountain road,
With smiling surface fair and broad,
Within its treach'rous breast receiv'd
Full many a knight whom hist'ry griev'd.
As wolves surrounding timid deer,
Hung on their flanks each mountaineer,
Who almost quench'd their hate that day,
So deadly was the bloody fray.
'Halt!' was the cry, in ring they meet,
A circle in all parts complete :
Sadly the Normans rein'd their horse,
To counsel on their future course :—
'Small need of valour,' Bauzan said ;
'My lords, this day we've only bled—
And not a Welchman's corse is lying,
T' atone for heaps of dead and dying.
May curses light on Mechyl's head,
Who led us in this ambuscade.
That twice damn'd traitor now has fled,
To glory o'er our heaps of dead.'
He glanced around—'By Heav'n, I swear
But half our noble force is here,
And we like sheep are falling low,
Without the power to strike a blow.
Oh Mary ! if we're doom'd to die,
Oh let us with our foemen lie,
So that in our untimely death,
Our mingled bloods may stain the heath!—

Lord Patrick !' then aloud he cries,
' Or Carew, what can ye advise ?'
Sadly they answered—' On, still on,
Till Abertievy's walls are won ;
Retreat is vain, we cannot fly,
Press onward, let us fight, or die !'

" Onward, still onward, while their spears
Hurl ceaselessly the mountaineers,
And Meredydd, with sparkling eye,
Smiling beholds the Normans die.
Loudly he cheers his warriors on,
Their ills, their injuries t' atone ;
The Kymry need no urging cheer,
The bosom of each mountaineer,
With patriot ardour, wildly glows,
And detestation of his foes.
The arrows whistle through the air ;
The spears are hurled on high ;
Loudly the Cambrian breezes bear
The death moans of the enemy—
But still relentless, fiercer still,
Echoes from cliff and hoary hill,
The conquerors' heart-piercing cry,
Which they shout forth exultingly.

" Noon now was glowing in the sky,
The knights were toiling wearily,
For they had press'd through bush and briar,
O'er rock and stone, through stream and mire ;

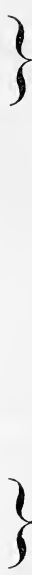
Dark blood-stains dimm'd their polish'd steel,
Or dripp'd in streams from head to heel,
And plumes o'er vizored heads were drooping,
And forms o'er saddle-bows were stooping;
Brave comrades by their sides were falling,
Sons on their sires in death were calling—
Then, with a moan suppressed of pain,
Sank lifeless on the gory plain.
Within a narrow glen compress'd
Where only two could ride abreast;
With rocks on each side piled on high,
In stern and hoary majesty,
On these the active Kymry trod,
As if it was a beaten road;
And in the hollow gorge beneath,
Masses of stone in heaps they cast,
Which dealt around on all sides death,
Thus many a warrior breathed his last.

“No power could longer now restrain
The Welch from rushing on their foe;
Command, entreaty, all is vain,
For hand to hand, and blow for blow,
With flashing steel and hungry spears,
In thousands rush'd the mountaineers.
Vainly did knightly valour then,
Strive 'gainst the sons of hill and glen;
De Bauzan was the first who sank,
Ap Owain's blade his life blood drank;

Then valiant Merydith ap Rhys,
The soul of Patrick did release.
The Normans fought like wolves at bay :
Inured in many a bloody fray
To deeds of might, with sword and axe,
They strove against renewed attacks,
As only men will fight who feel
Their life hangs on their glancing steel,
While desperation nerves the heart,
And strength supernal does impart.
In vain their efforts; band on band
Aid the wild conflict hand to hand;
Some turn to fly, but yet around,
The furious Welch in swarms are found,
And those who reach the Towy's flood,
Reach but to stain it with their blood,
Or find beneath its glassy wave
No respite, save a wat'ry grave;
Those who spur madly o'er the plain
Their noble chargers, speed in vain—
Trembling they sink beneath their load,
And die upon the grassy sod;
Those who bestride them cannot rise,
Rider and horse in agonies,
Together, in the flight or strife,
Yields each at once his weary life.

“ And now the sun with reddening glow,
Was tinging o'er each mountain brow,

And with its fast declining beams,
Are hush'd the Normans' dying screams,
While echo no more multiplies
The warrior's closing agonies.
The Welch have slaked their thirst for blood,
Appeased is their revengeful mood,
For scarcely one escaped to tell
What fate their brethren true befel.
By Towy's flood in many a heap,
Thousands of Norman warriors sleep,
O'er whom the Cambrian eagles keep
A sick'ning watch, a savage ward,
Their bloody feast of slain to guard.
Full many a noble, known to fame,
Whose deeds had earned a warrior's name,
Sleeps in some wild and tangled dell,
His resting-place not one can tell—
He mingles with the dust he trod,
Perchance he now may deck the sod—
Some child who plucks the violet's bloom,
May linger o'er a Norman's tomb.
Thus, thus, Lord Griffith, was the fray,
None can my simple tale gainsay,
How Cambria's children won the day;
And ever may it thus befall
Those who the Kymry would enthrall.”



Hush'd was the gallant Minstrel's strain—
Burst from young Owain's heart, Amen!

The stern response was hardly breathed,
With the deep sigh together heaved,
When, hark ! the trumpet's brazen note
Through the old hall doth clearly float.
" Who wakes the night ?" Lord Griffith cried ;
The pages from the banquet hied,
The warders answered from the wall—
They bore the tidings to the hall—
" That Diserth's Captain at the gate,
With fifty horsemen armed, did wait."
" Come they in peace ?" " They do, my Lord ;
Sir Hugh de Lacy sends thee word,
That with the dawn he craves thy lance
Himself to aid, *e'en à l'outrance*."
" Then let the drawbridge fall," he said ;
" Bid the portcullises be raised.
Bring mead and wine, heap faggots high,
We will prolong the revelry.
But first command the heralds sound,
Let warders line the courtyard round,
And bid the torches blaze, that we
May greet the knight with courtesy."
The drawbridge clatters o'er the moat,
The heralds wake the trumpet's note,
'Neath the arch'd gate the Normans ride,
In all the pomp of martial pride ;
Their armour glitters in the blaze
Of hundred torches redd'ning rays,
While clang of steel, and horses' neigh,
And tramp of men, and trumpet's bray,

Discordant mingling in the air,
Awake the red deer from his lair,
And stately herons, soaring high,
Scream forth their harsh and piercing cry.

“Welcome is Hugh de Lacy here,”
Lord Griffith cried; “my humble cheer
E’en now is waiting on the board—
Then once more welcome, Diserth’s Lord.”
Their mutual greeting warm soon o’er,
They sought the banquet hall, and pour
Their generous pledges free; the feast,
With no mean hand renewed, each guest
Betakes him to, and flesh of deer
With other viands disappear
’Neath the determined charge of those
Who round the jovial banquet close.
Deep were their draughts, but well supplied,
The wine in no illib’ral tide
Was measured forth, for kind and free
Was Griffith’s hospitality.
The feast was o’er—the board was clear’d:
“Strange must this visit have appeared,
My Lord,” de Lacy said: “but now
Before high heaven I’ve made a vow
To dye my faulchion to the hilt,
In the heart’s blood of Tewdwr Wylt.
Thou know’st the outlaw? Yester morn,
But then return’d, and weary, worn,

(For I had ridden from Hereford)
My vassal tenants brought me word,
That Tewdwr Wylt, with all his band,
Had ravaged, burnt my border land—
And now in Powys' woods he lies,
With other dangerous enemies.
Therefore, Lord Griffith, in the name
Of England's King, thy aid I claim
This murd'rous villain to chastise,
Who doth both law and right despise."
"Thy claim's acknowledged, Diserth's Chief—
For him of whom I hold my fief.
But wait till day—then we will ride
With thee, and tame the Outlaw's pride."
But Owain murmur'd, "Eagles fight
Not with their kind—or kite with kite:
For galled was his young heart to know,
His sire should deem a Celt a foe—
And Normans join in England's cause,
Against his country's rights and laws.

No sleep the Chieftains knew that night,
But with the earliest dawn of light,
With twice three score of horse and men,
They seek the Outlaw of the glen.
Wide were the woods of Powys then,
Where scarce an oak now greets the ken;
Dense was the wood and forest shade,
Which harbour for the outlaw made.

Those were the days of Robin Hood,
With his wild craftsmen of the wood,
When the winged arrow won the meal,
And life depended on the steel;
Then law was weak, and might was right.
The sword th' offender did indite,
The word was followed by the blow,
And only blood appeased the foe.

Twice three score warriors seek the blood
Of this wild Chieftain of the wood
But half the number of the band,
Would rather to the English land
Their Lord would lead them, than that they
Should stake their lives in civil fray.
For many friends had Tewdwr Wylt,
And seldom was his foe a Celt;
Though outlaw'd still a patriot's fire
His deeds of bloodshed did inspire,
For Cambria's sons he ever spared,
And none save trait'rous Kymri shared,
With Normans of the border land,
The vengeance of his bloody brand.
None knew the hist'ry of his life,
Save that in ceaseless deeds of strife
For many a year was known his name,
And wide had grown his valour's fame.
Of noble birth by many deem'd,
By some a peasant churl esteem'd,

Or monk disgraced; and others said
He'd ever been a warrior bred;
And it was whisper'd and believed
Some hidden crime his spirit grieved,
And that when in his gloomy hour,
He'd yield him to the demon's power,
When the most favour'd of his men
Dared not approach his Chieftain then—
For he would roam by brook and stream,
In the wild storm when lightning's gleam
Lit up around his lonely path,
And roar'd the tempest in its wrath;
Then with his head exposed and bare—
While round him play'd the livid glare
Of heaven's dread fire, and pour'd the rain,
Which beat against his heated brain—
Upon the beetling cliff he'd stand,
Above the flood with outstretch'd hand,
He'd point where roar'd the stream below,
Exclaiming, "Ha! I see thee now!"
With quivering lip and starting eye,
As if he writhed in agony:
And then anon with sudden start,
As though an arrow cleft his heart,
High in the air he'd spring and cry—
"At last, at last I see thee die!"
The madd'ning fit would pass at length,
His cave he'd reach with failing strength,
Sink on the rocky floor, and there
Yield up his spirit to despair,

And ne'er till morning dawn would he
Recover from his misery.

Such was the Outlaw of the glen
De Lacy sought to slay ; but when
He left his towers, he little thought
One of the band whose chief he sought,
Had heard the trumpet sound to horse,
Correctly numbered o'er his force,
Then like an arrow from the bow,
Had sped to warn of coming foe.
Dark Tewdwr listened with a smile,
“ Wait,” said he, “ till the dark defile,
The trait'rous Welsh and Normans gain,
Then when retreat will all be vain,
Sir Hugh de Lacy's pride we'll tame,
And make him dread the Tewdwr's name.”

Down by the Vrnwy's rushing tide,
The mingled forces quickly ride,
Till Llansantffraint is pass'd, and then
They turn them up the Tanat's Glen ;
For 'neath the Berwyn's gloomy shade,
The Outlaw fierce his hold had made.
Up, up the valley, on, still on,
Till Milltir Gerrig's pass is won ;
Bleak, desolate, where nature's mood
Ever denies the dark fir wood,
To spread its boughs amid the scene,
And softly tint her sternest mien.

There sleep in majesty sublime,
Unchanged from earth's primæval time,
The hoary rocks which scorn to wear
A wreath to hide their temples bare,
But proudly gaze upon the sun,
Like regal chiefs transform'd to stone,
Regarding mortal sympathy
An insult to their dignity,
Alike defying winds and storms,
To shake or tear their stalwart forms.

Halt ! for the road with stone was block'd.
Listen ! as if a demon mock'd,
A shout derisive loudly rung,
The while with giant force was flung
A spear, which struck De Lacy's horse,
The noble charger fell a corse.
Rider and steed roll o'er and o'er,
Beside them does the torrent roar ;
Another moment, the ravine
De Lacy's burial place had been,
When Owain from his charger sprung,
Around the knight his arms he flung,
And then with concentrated force,
He dragg'd him from his quiv'ring horse.
Now general the fight became,
The Normans fought, but fought in vain,
For Tewdwr's men, above, around,
Held everywhere the vantage ground.

The Lord of Powys cheer'd his troops,
But fiercer than an eagle swoops,
The Outlaw with his battle-axe,
Led on his followers' attacks.
Lord Griffith's men, with failing strength,
Would not support the charge ; at length,
Their chief surrounding, they gave way,
Their hearts ne'er warm'd unto the fray,
And now they only cared to save
Their leader from a bloody grave.
De Lacy cursed their recreant hearts,
With all the ire which hate imparts,
As, disappointed of his prey,
He gnashed his teeth like wolf at bay ;
And galling was the smart to know,
That foil'd and vanquished by a foe,
Whom he that morn had vow'd should die,
He with his troops perforce must fly.

But where is Owain ? In the flight
Cut off, with a tried warrior's might,
His back against a wall of rock,

He fights unconquer'd and alone,
Nor reels before the tempest shock
Of spears in fury thrown.

Before him piled a heap of dead,
Of friends and followers who had shed
Their life blood to defend their lord,
And now their bodies form a guard,

A rampart, which no foe can gain
Its brave defender with the slain
To pile—though wounded sore,
And crimson'd with his welling gore.
Yet adds he to the bloody wall,
For foemen heap'd on foemen fall;
And glist'ning spear does not avail,
Deeply to pierce his polish'd mail.
Thus hung the fight, when from the crowd,
An outlaw burst, and yelling loud,
With wild goat's bound the rock ascends
Where scarce a fissure footing lends;
With knife inserted, here and there,
Awhile suspended in the air,
Then upward springing, ne'er deterr'd
By sense of fear, at first he heard
Fiercely approving shouts below,
Then these were hush'd; all silent now,
With breath held hard, beheld him clinging,
Where every footstep down was flinging
The crumbling rock which fail'd to hold
His weight, and down the dark cliff roll'd.
A jutting crag he reach'd at length,
There paused he to regain his strength:
It shakes, it trembles, hung on high,
It leaves him 'twixt the earth and sky,
Against the surface of the stone,
Supported by his arms alone;
Yet undismayed, one effort more,
The cragsman's fearful task is o'er.

Still panting, from beneath he hears
His fellow outlaws' deaf'ning cheers;
Then o'er the rock he peers below,
To mark where stands th' unconquer'd foe.
A pond'rous mass of stone he bears
Unto the edge, while fiercely glares
His blood-shot eye, and o'er his brow
The look of triumph glistens now.
He lifts the fragment in the air,
With grinning rage and hate, but ere
He hurls it on the helpless foe,
Headlong himself he rolls below.
A shout of horror from beneath
Greeted their comrade's fearful death,
And ere he reach'd the mountain's base,
A mother could no features trace.
While Owain's fosterbrother's eye
Beam'd with the look of victory;
For he his youthful chief had lost,
And seeking where the dead were most,
Beheld him valiantly withstand
The infuriate foe with bloody brand,
Had mark'd the cragsman in his wrath
Ascend the awe-inspiring path,
Then by a longer, safer road,
Which none though save a goat had trod,
He'd reach'd the peak in time to save
His chieftain from a bloody grave.

“ Hold! monsters, hold!” as they renewed,
With wild revenge, th' unequal feud;

“ Hold, hold !” Each outlaw lower’d his spear,
Abash’d was each wild mountaineer.
With faulchion dyed from point to hilt,
Before them stood dark Tewdwr Wylt.
He turn’d to Owain: “ Yield, or die !”
Who cried, “ I scorn your clemency.”
“ Then be thy blood”—he paused, and then
He glanced his dark eye down the glen,
Where heaps of Welch and Normans lay,
The victims of the mountain fray.
“ My cup of blood hath well been filled
This day,” he muttered ; “ thou shalt yield.”
“ Ho !” to his troops, “ o’erpower yon knight,
And bloodless end the bloody fight.”
Like waves which rush upon the rock,
So fell they on : beneath their shock
Owain was overwhelmed ; he sank—
A pris’ner on the torrent’s bank.

On Cader Ferwyn’s giant form
Is hanging now the infant storm ;
Around its summits vapours lour,
And time proclaims the evening hour.
Who ever from the vale beneath
Has watch’d the misty rain-clouds wreath
Their fluttering robes round summit hoar,
Descending gently, lower, lower,
Till all the peaks are lost to sight,
Obscured in an ethereal night

Of driving mist—anon, the gleam
Of lightning, like a burning seam
Through nature's vapoury veil, divides
The spheres: then fancy may behold
How in stern majesty forth rides,
With flashing bannerole unroll'd,
The "Old Storm King;" while madly springs
At the red symbol, on wild wings,
From the unfathomed depths of space,
The legion of his kindred race,
To battle with the briny sea,
And scourge the wolds, the woods, and lea.

Beside the Tanat's shrunken flood,
Dark Tewdwr, in his sullen mood,
Was pacing wildly to and fro;
Anon upon the stream below
His eyes were bent, then upward cast,
He listened to the rising blast,
Or watched the Cader's summit sear
In the thick vapours disappear;
The dark defile seem'd darker still,
Whistled the wild blast o'er the hill,
The Pistyll's fall with mournful sound,
Loud echo'd through the dark profound.
High o'er the cliff it falls at first,
Then 'neath a rocky arch doth burst;
Thence in a vast unbroken sheet,
The rocks recumbent at its feet

Receive the rushing of roaring flood,
Firmly as when at first they stood.
Dark Tewdwr mark'd the hill storm gather,
Then sweep across the mountain heather ;
As if he felt the hour his own,
He sprung upon the arch of stone,
Which spann'd the cataract midway,
Half hidden in the flashing spray.
He seem'd the genius of the hour,
Endued with supernatural power,
Standing unmoved where men would quiver,
And stoutest, hardiest frame would shiver ;
Then with his hand raised o'er the water,
Burst from his lips derisive laughter.
It ceased, the very stream that gushed,
Seem'd for that fearful moment hush'd,
As if that man had power to still
The mighty torrent of the hill.

“Ye clouds, descend—ye mighty winds,
Speak louder—ye are my true friends ;
In unison your voices chime
With my gnarl'd breast, in tones sublime,
As when with mighty, fearful groans,
And deep, low, agonizing moans,
Creation in its woe gave birth
Unto this foul abortion—earth.
That dread prophetic awful cry
Ye bore throughout the shrinking sky,

Which trembled as it heard—a world
Upon the fields of space was hurl'd,
Where coming days should see unfurl'd,
The banner of that fallen one,
Who heaven itself would fain have won.
When ye spread o'er the void that tale,
Ye would have seen heaven's suns turn pale,
Were vision yours—how each bright star,
When ye its future did declare,
Must horror-struck have heard its doom,
That through the endless nights to come
They were, until the death of time,
'To be the witnesses of crime!'

Ye rushing winds, your theme howl forth—

Speak on! there is a kindred madness
In your wild speech. As ye round earth
Have sail'd, each tale of wretchedness
Which ye have heard, I'd hear, and know
Th' accursed sum of human woe,
That I in others' pangs might feel
That stern companionship in ill,
Which quells the poignancy of grief,
Not soothing, though it brings relief.

“Ye, who have swept across the desert's waste;
Ye, who have whispered in each cloistered aisle;
Ye, who have dwelt in halls, in marble cased,
Lingered in palaces which proud kings pile;
Ye, who have wandered in the peasant's home,
Danced with the barque upon the curling foam,

Hung on bright flowers, sighed in sweet orange
groves,

Listen'd in every clime to human loves,
Kiss'd Beauty's lip, slept on her glowing breast,
In silence heard the burning tale confess'd ;
Moan'd 'mid the ruins where the ivy creeps,
Stirr'd its smooth leaf when it in moonlight
sleeps ;

Dried the salt tear, the burning forehead cool'd,
When grief or passion could not be controll'd ;
On soft wings hovered where the soldier dies,
And wafted upward, to the list'ning skies,
The moan of his heart-rending agonies ;
Ye, who have borne, and spread upon your
breeze,

The hydra-headed phantom of disease ;
Ye, who have roam'd from the remotest time,
'Mid every deed of virtue and of crime—
Tell me, ye winds ! unto the human heart,
Can aught such burning extacy impart,
As just revenge ? I hear ye answer—No !
Well have ye said ; be this, then mine, to know."

He paused—loud through the wave-worn
gorge,

The naiads their white steeds onward urge ;
And now above his head appeared,
The mountain stream a dark wall rear'd.
On, on it came with deaf'ning roar,
Then o'er the precipice rush'd o'er ;

Still on the fearful arch he stood,
Wild gazing at the madden'd flood ;
O'er his tall form the white spray fell,
And wrapt him in a misty veil.
" Yes," he resumed, " the hour is mine ;
Spirit of vengeance, I am thine—
Griffith ! thou art my enemy.
Revenge, revenge ! thy son shall die."
The bloody doom was scarcely said—
Was it an image fancy made ?
That flowing hair, that rounded form,
Was no creation of the storm.
Speechless he gazed—the image grew
Still more distinct in clearer view.
He shudder'd. " Yes, 'tis she, indeed !"
The vision seem'd as it would plead :
Its arms were raised, its upturn'd eye
Appeared imploring clemency.
" No, woman ! I have sworn," he cried ;
" He dies ! let weal or woe betide."
And then, with one gigantic bound,
He clear'd the yawning dark profound,
And headlong down the valley rush'd,
Swifter than the waters gush'd.

There sat within a spacious cave,
A lonely pair, one sad, both grave :
The former was a woman fair,
Of figure slight, but noble air ;

Blue was her eye as mountain lake,
When the soft wind no ripples make.
And often so intense the blue,
It might be deem'd of ebon hue,
As when the lamps of paradise,
In sparkling myriads deck the skies.
The arch'd concave, whence they are hung,
Seems in the radiance by them flung,
Its native blaz'ning to forget,
In hue half azure and half jet.
And o'er her breast her auburn hair
Fell in long ringlets rich, and rare,
As unconfined her form they graced,
Floating below her rounded waist.
Her faded cheeks were pale and wan,
Her neck, like bosom of the swan;
Like marble, her expanded brow
In whiteness mock'd the winter's snow.
With head reclining on her breast,
A manly form doth fondly rest;
His features large, but well defined,
Not coarse, and deeply, deeply lined,
As if with care or thought—his face
A monarch's regal line might grace.
Command was in his coal-black eye,
In sternness were his features cast,
They wore the look of majesty
O'er mind and man. He gently pass'd
His hand across his forehead wide,
Then, as if he some thought defied,

He bit his lips, and ground his teeth,
While panting, heaving came his breath.

“What ails thee, Tewdwr?” it was he—

“Oh, let me share thy thoughts with thee.”

She pass’d her hand through his dark locks,
The raven hair its whiteness mocks.

“Oh, Tewdwr, tell me! day by day,

Thou’rt growing colder, yet dost say,

I love thee, Newryst, from my heart!

Then why not thy dark griefs impart?

I know no other joy but thee;

No thought can breathe felicity,

Unless thy name is mingled there,

For thou dost all my day dreams share.

All the imaginings I know,

Of hope, and pleasure, peace, all flow

In that warm stream of love for thee,

Soul of my soul! and pure and free,

Through life will that warm heart-flood be.

Deceive me not with love’s cold name.”

“Newryst,” he murmur’d, “still the same

To thee as ever, am I now.

Thy hand may smoothe my wrinkled brow,

But that which boils within the brain,

To soothe it, all thy power is vain.

But, oh, forgive me if I seem

Darker and colder; ’tis the gleam

Of days by-gone, which, light’ning like,

Withers where its bright glancings strike.

And such a gleam this day has pass'd
Across my sight. I stood aghast
Like Cain, when on his ear loud struck
His doom, when God Almighty spoke;
Or like King Saul, when Samuel rose
To speak the victory of his foes;
Or as when Cæsar rose to cry,
'We meet again at Philippi,'
I trembled, in my agony—
But yet I swear the youth shall die!"
He started to his feet. "What youth?"
She cried. "Thou dost but jest—in truth,
Thou canst not mean to slay thy foe—
Tewdwr, thou dost but mock me now."
"Mock thee—no! I've sworn the word,
Childless shall be fair Powys' lord."

She flung herself upon his breast,
With starting eyes and streaming hair.
"O, Tewdwr! thou must surely jest;
Then why assume this gloomy air?
By all that's dear to thee on earth,
By every thought of noble birth,
By all thy fondest hopes of heaven,
By all thy darkest fears of hell,
As thou wouldst wish to be forgiven,
Tewdwr, forego thy purpose fell!
I know thy wrongs are passing great,
I know the bloody thirst, the hate,

With which thy life is sought, by those
Who are thy unrelenting foes.
I would not stay thee in the fight,
I would not raise my hand to save,
Nor have thee sheathe thy faulchion bright
While yet a foe should need a grave.
But now, when reason on her throne
Does make thee all thyself, thy own,
And thou thy purpose well canst weigh,
In sober judgment, let me pray,
That murder's soul-condemning guilt
May never stain thee, Tewdwr Wylt.

“I know thou wilt relent; thy heart
Shrinks at the thought; I feel thee start
With horror that thy name should be
Branded with such ignominy.
Thou hast endured, hast been revenged,
Though much remains to be avenged;
But each event throughout thy life,
Each fearful scene of bloody strife,
Where thou hast e'er a conqueror trod,
Has raised from off thy breast a load,
And made thee feel the debt was less
Thou owest man: though pitiless
Was then thy blade, yet no regret
Bade memory the past forget.
But now, permit thy steel to drink
Thy captive's blood! oh, do not think

The deed will cause thy heart one thrill
Of joy or pleasure, but it will
Thy bosom haunt, with sin's dread curse,
With endless gnawings of remorse.
Yield, I implore thee—lov'd one, yield!
Bid thy stern, bounding heart be still'd,
And grant this boon, the first, and last—
If I denied am from thee cast.

I cannot look upon thy brow,
I cannot bask beneath thine eye,
I cannot love, as I love now,

If thy young prisoner must die.
Thou whom I've look'd upon as one,
The greatest, if not more than man,
To see thee levelled with the herd
Of villains, by thyself abhorr'd,
Would be to have my temple razed,
The image broken, which I've gazed,
Gazed on—nay, worshipp'd, and adored,
Where my heart's incense was outpour'd.
But I could never live to prove
The mis'ry of a wreck of love;
Then, Tewdwr, bid me cease to grieve,
And learn 'tis god-like to forgive."

He wiped the tear-drop from her cheek,
His eyes met hers upturn'd to his;
"Newryst," he said, "that look doth speak,
Oh, how much more than words—and this

Is love—that for thy sake I give
Thy wish'd for boon—the boy shall live ;
Thou ne'er hast known me yield before—
This act of grace, then, value more.
'Tis purely for thy sake ; no claim
Of heaven, or earth, which thou couldst name,
Would for an hour preserve his life
From the keen all-avenging knife.
Think'st thou that if in Poole's old halls,
A pris'ner in its massive walls,
Or if within De Lacy's power,
My life would be prolong'd an hour ?
If, rising from the mould'ring grave,
The very dead for me should crave,
E'en they in vain would leave their gloom,
Denied, each ghost would seek its tomb.
Yet I have lived to spare my foe—
It is enough, but I will now
Learn if the youth thy love doth save
Would fill a man's or coward's grave."

Dark was the cell where Owain lay,
And damp the rocks of granite gray ;
Yet sleeps he as an infant sleeps,
When o'er its rest its mother keeps
Her loving watch ; and now the rays
Of pine knot's cheerful ruddy blaze,
Borne by a friar, doth illume
His stony dungeon's pitchy gloom.


The friar murmur'd, "Sleeps he now,
No painful thoughts disturb his brow;
Not the effect of apathy,
But calm, as if from danger free;
This, this is courage more than I
Have dream'd of in philosophy.
See how his eyelids' drooping fringe
The marble of his cheek doth tinge;
But, hush! how softly he is breathing,
How sweet that smile his red lips wreathing;
And now he heaves a gentle sigh,
And murmurs words, in melody,
Like the soft breeze, on harp strings straying,
Or when the fingers are delaying
Upon the notes unthinkingly,
They wake sweet dreamy tones which die, }
In soft and silv'ry reverie,
As ill-tim'd buds which never bloom,
But sink part open'd to the tomb.
Be still, my beating heart, thou'rt dreaming,
Such foolish thoughts are not beseeeming;
The mortal foe of all my race—
But there is something in that face
Which wakes a chord within my breast,
Which I had deem'd was aye at rest;
It brings unto my mind again,
My boyhood's hope, my manhood's pain, }
And dreams of joy which time proved vain.
Yes, yes, each lineament is hers,
Oh, that I could my days reverse,

And taste that bright felicity
Again, in all its purity.
But this is madness, and that fay,
Which fancy conjured in the spray,
And now this lovely sleeping child,
Pictures her beauty ere she was beguil'd,
While memory wakes the woman in my heart,
Bidding the long dried tear-drop start."
He press'd his hand upon his burning brow,
And murmur'd, "Newryst, how I thank thee
now."
A trembling hand was slipp'd within his own,
A swimming eye was bent upon his face,
A soft voice whisper'd, "The victory is won,
And thou hast triumph'd with a monarch's
grace."

CANTO THE SECOND.

“NAY, Evan, is it dawn so soon?
Methought ’twas but of night the noon;
No, I mistake, it is not day—
Then, why this torch, whose ruddy ray,
Thus brightly streaming, made it seem
The morning light? Is this a dream?”
A holy monk! upon his brain
Flash’d the stern truth: “I yet remain
Captive—my fate methinks I know—
’Tis ’graven, father, on thy brow...”
“Yes,” he replied, “I bear thy doom—
’Tis mine to shrive thee for the tomb.”
“Then be it so.” “Can one so young
See from his grasp un murmuring flung
Hope, pleasure, honour, riches, might—
All that which makes man’s dark lot bright—
Without a sigh, without a tear
For all we deem on earth most dear?”
“Yes,” Owain answered, “be it so;
I scorn, from a much-injured foe,
To ask the boon of life, when he
Would know no act of clemency,

Himself a pris'ner in the hands
Of Griffith's or De Lacy's bands...
Short be my shrift! I bid thee tell
My noble sire no tear-drop fell,
Or sigh burst forth, to taint the fame
Of my forefathers' princely name.
Then soothe my gentle mother's woe—
Dry the salt tears that then will flow:
Say that my Christian faith stood fast,
And that I loved her to the last.
One more request: this lock of hair
To Hugh de Lacy's daughter bear;
Say thou didst cut it from my head,
When I was numbered with the dead,
And that I breath'd her name, when fell
The blow which hush'd my last farewell.
Now, holy father, let me be
Once more alone—in spirit free;
And, though no bell my knell shall toll,
Yet pray thou for the passing soul.”
“Thy boon I grant; but ere I go,
The outlaw'd Chief desires to know
Why Owain ap Griffith is his foe?”
“I am no foe of Tewdwr Wylt,
Himself must answer for his guilt;
He ne'er has injured mine or me;
And ever spared the wild Cymry,
Save those defamed by treachery;
And I must hang my head with shame,
My sire's is e'en a traitor's name;



But, were I Chief of Powys, none
Save Cambria's Prince as Lord I'd own."

"Yet," the majestic Monk replied,

"Thyself wouldst take a Norman bride?"

"And wherefore bind not by the ties
Of blood our country's enemies?"

But this is dreaming—we must part—
I fain would commune with my heart."

"Wilt thou the boon of life not crave?"

"Never—if it could doubly save..."

"Thou art an honour to thy line,
Unasked, brave youth, the boon is thine!"

The Friar doff'd his gown and hood—

Before his pris'ner Tewdwr stood.

"Nay, thank me not," the Chieftain cried,

"I would not wound thy noble pride;

But now no thanks are due to me—

Another craved my clemency—

'Tis free for thee to stay or go;

But, if thou dost not scorn thy foe,

I bid thee welcome to the board,

Which bears but what the wilds afford."

"Thanks, Chieftain, for thy courtesy,

And I accept it cheerfully!"

The hardened flesh of mountain deer,

With sparkling mead, compose their cheer;

Their hall, a chamber of the cave—

Beneath them roll'd the Tanat's wave;

Upon the cliff, above its flood,
Blazed the pine faggots from the wood,
And these illumed the cheerful meal,
Gleaming upon their polish'd steel.
While, in the dark woods, here and there
Sparkled the watch-fire's ruddy glare,
Round which the outlaws gathered close,
And minstrels' song of ancient foes
Burst on the air, then sank again
The shrill notes of the wild refrain,
As all in turn take up the song,
And skilfully the theme prolong;
Round, round it pass'd, and still the wire
They struck with an unceasing fire.

Dark Tewdwr gazed upon his guest,
Rose, sank, and rose again his breast,
As if some long forgotten feeling
Was now through his wild bosom stealing:
"How like," he murmured, "are those eyes,
Dark as the midnight tempest's skies;
That smile is her's—that look, again..."
He press'd his hand upon his brain—
"Tis folly—lunacy—but yet,
I cannot now her face forget—
And this fair boy has stirr'd again
A hallowed feeling's lost refrain.
Owain, thou must remark," he cried,
"My silent gloom; I know not why,
Unless my bosom is belied,
We feel a mutual sympathy.

Is it not so? Thy speaking eyes
Thy heart's assent at once implies.
Then wilt thou list, while I relate
What drove me to an outlaw's fate?"

The Outlawed Chieftain's Tale.

"Although deep wrinkles mark my brow,
And my dark hair is grizzled now,
Yet two score years have not passed by
Since I was in my infancy.
My birth-place and my parent's name—
The last have oft been known to fame—
May not be spoken of by me,
'Twould stain them with my infamy.
'Twas said I was a wilful child,
Almost untameable—so wild
My boyish passions were; but still
My fierce, ungovernable will,
Obeyed one talisman, but one—
I could be ruled by love alone:
And when this magic pow'r was sway'd,
No despot by his serf obeyed
Is served more blindly, than my soul
Acknowledged this divine control.

Extremes were mine of all that rules
Warriors, philosophers, and fools.

“ Passions thus mingled, could but bring
Full many a deep and bitter sting
Of pride insulted, hope destroyed.
The aspirations oft which buoyed
My heart were unattainable ;
Yet nothing could subdue my will,
Or make me bear with patience even
The loss of that for which I'd striven.
I grew in strength and years : and one
Grew with me, and with her begun
My true existence, and my all
Of that ... But, stay, I must recall
My thoughts, too speedy in their race.
Her's was that loveliness of face,
That untold beauty, which is known
And pictur'd by the heart alone
In bright, ideal love—the air,
Unspeaking, which women wear
Sometimes, half grace, half dignity,
Which sweetly fascinates the eye—
The fancy of the poet's mind—
Unrealiz'd, and half defined.
Not feature or expression yet,
Though both in facial union met,
Was her's—I know no word but soul,
T' express the charm which crowns the whole :

Her eyes were dark as night, and keen
Their glance; nor have I ever seen
Aught like them, until at first
Bright vision like thine on me burst—
I do not flatter, 'tis my heart
That speaks—and I cannot impart
To thee a picture which can give
A truer image, than, did she live
Again on earth, 'twould be as thee,
But softened effeminately.
Then dost thou wonder I did start,
And wildly thrill'd my stony heart,
When I saw thee, and almost deem'd
Her charms again before me beam'd,
As in those days of joy and peace,
When even I knew happiness.

“ We grew together, and those days
Were pass'd in the full noontide blaze
Of joy. In words we never breath'd
Our love, or thought of vows—we lived
In spirit union—happy—blest—
Each in the other, while sweet rest
And peace shed o'er our beating hearts
That soothing balm it aye imparts;
We had no wants ungratified,
No wishes or desires denied:
Rank, honour, station, wealth were ours,
And mine were almost regal powers.

Then, when we both were young, the priest
Together bound us, and the feast
Was gay and joyous, and the crowd
Of friends pour'd forth their blessings loud,
While hearts were full, and hands were prest,
And we were, yes, supremely blest :
The hours seem'd all too short for us,
To fill our sum of happiness,
And time, as it roll'd swiftly by,
Saw still unchanged our extacy."

The Outlaw paused, his white lip quivered,
While painfully his tall form shivered,
Then, with an effort of his will,
He seem'd to say, " My heart be still !
When Memory wings her backward flight,
And, through the dark succeeding night,
Once more recalls those blissful days
When bask'd I 'neath the cloudless rays
Of joyousness ; 'tis agony
To paint those scenes long dead to me ;
Though I have striven my breast to steel,
It is in vain the wound to heal—
Though often seared with deeds of blood,
Yet, in my dark and gloomy mood,
Old thoughts will tear it still apart,
And bleeds afresh my broken heart :
'Tis like that chasm which would close
Never, until within its breast
Unfathomable should repose
The noblest thing which Rome possess'd :

And all, save life, I've hurl'd below,
Yet the abyss is yawning now ;
But soon its mighty depths shall keep
My form enwrapped in endless sleep,
Then it must close ... Blest hour, press on !
O, how I long that rest were won !

“O, darksome fate ! What am I now ?
A branded felon !—and the blow,
Which in the dust would lay me low,
Mankind would hail, and deem it even
A blest deliverance of heaven.
Hated by most and feared by all,
My destiny might well appal
A being of demoniac birth,
Who has no kindred tie on earth ;
For, though detested by mankind,
Amid his native race he'd find
Some mutual feeling, mutual tie—
Some evidence of sympathy ;
But I, a comet 'mid the spheres,
Rush swift along my race of years,
While planets tremble as I pass,
And moons with terror blanched recede ;
Yet bolder than the starry race,
As I in swiftness all exceed,
Upon the scorching sun I gaze,
And almost pale its fervent blaze,
Then back to darkness whence I sprung,
'Mid the dead worlds to sleep among.

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The grave of suns, where orbs expired,
Which in past ages were attir'd
In robes of flame; centres of light,
Around which systems brightly sped,
Sleep with their satellites in night,

Their swift-dissolving ashes spread—
A mass chaotic—o'er the realm
Where all existence death doth 'whelm.
Or see in me the Upas-tree,

Whose leaves a fatal breath exhale,
Dreaded by all, and doom'd to see

The birds which sweep by on the gale,
When my dark verdure greets their sight,
Accelerate their speedy flight.

“Let me resume. A son was our's;
Of ev'ry blessing—and in showers
They fell upon us—none like this
Had crown'd our smiling days of bliss—
It was the pinnacle of joy. And then
I thank'd my God—the deep ‘Amen,’
'Tis even now remembered well,
Which from the lips of Nesta fell,
Sunk in my grateful heart—my tears
Flow'd unrestrain'd, mingling with her's;
We wept from an excess of feeling,
Which, to our inmost hearts appealing,
Seem'd to constrain us to implore
The care of Him whom men adore.

I know not that it was the power
Of religion, which in that deep hour
Stole o'er our spirits, but before
That time I never did outpour
Such worship: nor since have I
Adored with such sincerity.

“I had a friend, who shared with me
Each bosom thought in unity;
And not a day pass'd by but we,
In hall or bower, or o'er the lea,
With hooded falcon on our wrist,
Ere from the vale the snowy mist
Had melted 'neath the solar rays,
Together we followed in the chase:
Sometime, along the blue stream's edge,
We sprung the heron from the sedge;
Or oft the bounding, antlered deer
We chased like flying mountaineer,
Till noon was glowing on the fell,
Then, by some limpid, sparkling well,
Beneath the rock, beside the stream,
We, shelter'd from the mid-day beam,
Whiled our sweet hours of rest away
With cheerful, joyous roundelay;
Then, when the evening shades stole o'er
The woodlands wild and sombre moor,
With weary steps, yet blithesome hearts,
Such as contentment aye imparts,

We sought my gentle Ladye's bower,
When often times the midnight hour
Surpris'd us, list'ning rapt'rously
While Nesta woke her minstrelsy.

“ Thus pass'd two years . . . A fairy dream,
In memory's night, oh, now they seem !
I often doubt such years were mine,
Till truth upon the past will shine,
And all with which I have been cursed
Seems darker for the bright days first . . .
Two joyous years ! when, through my brain,
Flash'd, lightning-like, once, and again,
A horrid doubt ! . . . I laughed to scorn
At first this feeling, I deem'd born
Of some dark phantom. It faded
Dimly away, and my poor, jaded
Bosom knew happiness again,
Ere doubt arose her life to stain.
Brief was this interlude of rest—
Brief was the calm that still'd my breast ;
When the dread fiend, Suspicion, stole
Gently, then occupied my soul,
And, Argus-like, a thousand eyes
Burst forth a host of witnesses,
To stamp with doubt her purity,
And give to happiness the lie !

“ I had been summon'd to the Court,
On pressing need of high import ;

But Nesta would not join the throng
To flit the gallant crowd among.
A fond adieu, a long caress—
A moment of such happiness!—
Her snowy arms were round me flung,
As weeping on my neck she hung.
I gazed upon her lovely face,
Then tore myself from her embrace,
And lest my heart should melt again,
 I rush'd away, and on my steed,
Spurr'd wildly up the lovely glen,
 As though I'd mock the light'ning's speed.
Away, away! through vale and wood,
My men might follow as they could;
And not until my falt'ring horse
Could no more hold his flying course,
Did I my madd'ning flight restrain,
And pull unwillingly the rein.

“By noon, we reach'd the Conway's ford,
We halted on its verdant sward,
Upon its banks our chargers grazed,
While I on its flood fondly gazed,
Watching abstractedly the stream,
Which, gilded in the gay sunbeam,
Flowed smiling on its destin'd course,
With then diminish'd, gentle force.
Perchance it was the rippling tide,
Perchance it was the breeze that sigh'd

With soothing softness through the vale,
As sometimes sighs the summer gale;
But, be the power what it may,
Fast slumb'ring on the bank I lay,
And now my thoughts were far away.
The time, it seem'd the matin hour,
I stood within my Ladye's bower;
Again upon my neck she hung,
Again her arms were round me flung...
I strangely started... could it be?...
I doubted my identity!
A closer scrutiny revealed
The truth... my dreaded curse was seal'd.
He whom I'd cherish'd (do not start)...
Yes, HE had stung me to the heart!
From slumber to my feet I sprung,
Myself upon my steed I flung,
The keen spurs lanced his glossy side,
The noble beast with bounding stride
Flew o'er the plain, but still too slow
To match the haste which fired me now!
On, on! no rocks our course impeded,
All dangers were alike unheeded;
The brawling brooks we springing clear'd,
But when the mountain-pass we near'd,
The heaving flanks, the starting eye,
Proclaim'd my steed must halt or die.
Reluctantly I drew the rein,
But knew to force him then was vain:

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The sun had long since sunk to rest,
And ceased to tinge the rosy west,
The mountain shades were deep'ning fast,
And o'er the valley darkly cast.
Again my slackened rein I shook,
Dash'd through the next opposing brook,
I neared my home—more wild my haste—
Down the bright valley we swept past;
Like falcon closing on his prey,
So we pursued our headlong way,
Until, upon the rocky height,
My ancient towers did greet my sight.
We reach'd the bottom of the vale—
One effort more will now avail—
To breast the hill—our task were done;
Burst from my gallant horse a groan—
I spurr'd—he answer'd to my call—
A bound into the air—'twas all —
His last wild effort—life was o'er—
A corse he roll'd upon the moor!
I rose uninjured; bounding on,
A secret portal-gate I won.
With cautious tread, yet eager haste,
Through gallery and hall I pass'd,
When softly on my ear there fell . . .
If it had been a demon's yell,
It would not through my brain have thrill'd
With half the horror which now fill'd
My panting heart . . . that gentle tone
Once used to me, and me alone!

“ I burst the door, O maddening sight,
Together in the soft moonlight,
His head reclining on her breast,
Did her destroyer fondly rest.
Upon my lip the white foam stood,
My starting eyeballs almost burst,
My soul was craving for their blood,
Burning with an ensanguined thirst.
As wild cat battles for her young,
Upon the treach’rous wretch I sprung ;
My blade was glancing in the air,
I mark’d his ready throat was bare,
When Nesta starting, caught the blow,
Foiling my vengeance on my foe ;
He seized the moment, turn’d and fled,
While her fair breast received my blade.
O god of vengeance ! on the floor
Her life blood pour’d a ruddy stream,
She fell, and, as she lay, stream’d o’er
Her lovely form the pale moonbeam,
Which in its purity appear’d
A mantle spread by peaceful heaven ;
It seem’d to say, Thou hast not spared
That which in mercy is forgiven.
Rage—fury—passion—where were ye,
To stay me when the deed was done ?
To quell my mortal agony,
And that dread fiend, Remorse, to drown.
I press’d my hand upon my brow,
’Twas clammy, and the palm was red

With that which dyed her bosom's snow—

With that life stream my blade had shed ;

One long last kiss, one burning look,

My fevered frame with horror shook.

Then rush'd I from the bloody scene,

And forth into the night serene,

Down the steep hill, across the mead,

Through the dark flood still on I sped,

As if I could outstrip my grief,

And find in solitude relief.

Through the wild woodlands, where the
glade

So dense, no straggling moonbeams played,

Yet here and there their rays shone through,

When fancy conjured into view

My Nesta's corpse before me lying,

Which seemed to watch her murd'rer flying.

The wood was past, before me rear'd,

The Arran's giant peaks appear'd ;

Up their steep sides from crag to crag,

My burning footsteps did not flag.

O'er cascades springing, where the spray

Dash'd in my face—away, away ;

Where vent'rous mortal ne'er had trod,

Still sped I o'er my frightful road.

I paused upon a precipice,


Beneath me yawned the deep abyss,

But I had not the power to throw

Myself upon the rocks below.

I trod the brink, I gazed beneath,
And long'd to taste the peace of death ;
Some unknown power my will restrain'd,
To misery I yet was chain'd.

“ Still stood I on the cliff's dark brow,
A mountain storm was gath'ring now ;
Far at my feet the wild cascade
Its ceaseless deaf'ning uproar made ;
I only heard it, for the cloud
Hid all around me in its shroud ;
Then burst the tempest o'er my head—
The vivid, hissing lightning played.
It form'd a halo round my brow,
Yet spared in scorn to lay me low ;
It flash'd upon the cliffs, the wood,
The old oaks fell, the roaring flood
Hissing received its bolts—rocks in
Atoms shivered, added to the din
As they roll'd fearfully. It glared
Upon the peaks—I, only I, was spared.
Terrifically wild was nature's storm,
But that which agonized my form
Seem'd pale beside it—when slow, yet
Gradually sure, doth set
The tide of grief upon the shore
Of life—man learns to bear its pow'r,
That when in its most fearful hour



In suff'ring's darkest midnight gloom,
He e'en can bide his dreariest doom.
But when with glitt'ring rays on one
Prosperity has ever shone,
And every wish is gratified
Ere hope for some desire has sighed,
When bursts unthought for in an hour,
O'er one so blest, the o'erwhelming power
Of misery, it doth impart
A keener anguish to the heart.

“ Had I spared her, I should have spared
Myself; but I, oh, more than shared
All that she felt—mine was vengeance,
A momentary thirst in that bright glance
Of steel was quench'd, but her blood,
Each drop of that ensanguined flood,
Like molten metal, seem'd to pour,
And eat into my bosom's core.
All of my enthusiastic mind,
Hope, joy, delight, in her were shrined;
The casket where each jewel shone,
The rock which life was built upon.
Had death o'erta'en her by degrees,
Or slain her by some slow disease,
Or by another had she perish'd,
I could have fondly, sweetly cherish'd
Her memory to the last, and wept
Over the sod 'neath which she slept,

And taught the violets to bloom
Above my Nesta's hallow'd tomb.
While fancy would behold her stealing
In the moonlight her form revealing,
As though she'd stoop'd from heaven to bless
My broken-hearted faithfulness.
But now dishonoured, murder'd, and
The blow dealt by her husband's hand,
The thought my soul with anguish wrung,
As though a venom'd asp had stung.

“ Thus pass'd the night; the day arose,
Still on that verge I saw it close
And dawn again—nor knew I then
An hour had pass'd me by—the ken
Of outward things was lost. That deed
Absorbed all thought, my mind did feed
On it alone. Nature gave way
At length, and on the rock I lay
In deep lethargic sleep—'twas death
Except in name, and that my breath
Came flitting—then a smarting pain
As from a wound woke me again.
Strange sounds were on the air, and now
Some giant wings, my fevered brow
Were fanning—then methought that I
Had pass'd into eternity.
On demon pinions borne, again
The same sensation of keen pain

Aroused me from my dreamy mood ;
My cheeks were dabbled with my blood.
And, lo ! above me wheeling, screaming,
An eagle, whose bright eyes were gleaming
With disappointed rage, that he
Must now forego his meal on me ;
And as I watch'd, I plainly saw
My gore had stain'd his talon'd claw.
My frame now rock'd with feebleness,
As I regain'd my feet once more ;

Even my sense of keen distress
Was not so poignant as before.
Life, passion, agony, had shrunk
From sheer exhaustion—I had drunk
So deeply of the venom'd bowl,
So nigh had it o'erwhelm'd my soul,
That like the fevered wretch, I woke
To faint existence—for the stroke
Remorse had dealt had left me naught,
Save a worn frame with suff'ring fraught.
I pass'd my hand across my face,
And shook with horror—I could trace
Nothing but starting bones—my eyes
Had sunk in graves—deep vacancies
Almost their sockets were.—A wolf
Had clambered upward from the gulf
Which lay beneath me—flashing fire
Leapt from her eyes—she came still nigher :
Rav'nous for food, her hungry jaws
Partly distended, she did pause

Again—doubting if flesh and blood,
Or if a shade before her stood.

As her eyes met my fixèd stare,
Rose on her back her bristling hair,
But less from fury than from fear,
As though she quail'd my limbs to tear.

I spoke—at my unearthly tones,
Which rattled in my throat, half groans—
Likeminglingscreams with muttered moans—
The wild beast, with an awful yell,
Fled terror-stricken down the dell.

“Is there a balm for the weary heart,

When the wells of tears are dry?

And though less galling is the smart,

Less keen the mental agony.

Yet grief has grown a deep disease,

A fest'ring wound within the soul,

And naught its throbbing can appease,

Which as the streamlet's gentle roll

Wears the smooth pebbles by degrees,

So throb succeeding throb again,

Of steady and unceasing pain,

Slays the poor wretch thus doom'd to die,

With sentimental cruelty.

Is there a peace? O, tell me where!

When the mind is strong, when the heart
still feels,

When all which renders earth most dear,

When all which to the heart appeals,

And binds the noblest minds in chains,
When all is gone—and naught remains
Save passion's wreck, a storm-worn frame,
E'en death in truth, though life in name.
A rose-tree when the snow falls fast,
A sunbeam on a polar sea,
Or on the arctic winter's blast
A flood of gentle harmony.
The past, sin-haunted, will not sleep,
'Tis ever like our native skies ;
Each gentle wind that blows, may sweep
Across them earth's impurities.
Deep may repose the germs of care,
Their slumbering presence, though conceal'd,
A word, or sigh, will oft lay bare,
In all their nakedness reveal'd ;
For thicker than the sea sands lie,
The chords of human sympathy,
In music, speech, and thought, are hidden,
And mem'ry wakes them oft unbidden.
Is there then peace this side the grave?
Where is the lonely grot, the cave
Where grief may slumber, man forget,
The broken heart be happy yet?
I've sought it in the woodland glade,
I've sought it 'neath the tall cliff's shade,
I've sought it where the fountains play,
And where the cascades dash their spray :
I've sought it 'mid the bright wood flowers,
In nature's halls, in nature's bowers,

And turn'd me to the search again
Oft as I found I'd sought in vain,
For ever 'mid each earthly scene,
Not peace, but change, did supervene.
And stamp'd indelibly I saw,
One pitiless, unchanging law,
Which darkened nature's majesty —
All things on earth are born to die.

“I've watch'd the ocean from the shore,
When the billows burst in deaf'ning roar,
And the white foam danced in blithesome glee,
Far as the straining eye could see.
Though dark and drear was the yawning flood,
And the heaving waves in mountains stood,
Yet I knew that deep in ocean's breast,
The mighty waters were at rest.
That where the algæ's boughs are spread,
And the mermaids watch the sleeping dead,
And sea-fawns gambol in the glades
Of the giant sea-weed's wild arcades—
That there, no tempest's power can reach,
Or howl along that deep sea beach,
Nor lightning's flash, or thunder's roar,
Be heard upon that silent shore.
Has not the mind a depth, I cried,
Or is it unto man denied
To know that which the restless sea
Obtains—a blest immunity

From change and strife?—is there no deep,
Where passions, tempests, ever sleep?

“’Tis not in the vulgar walks of life
There ever reigns perpetual strife,
Nor is it in the hermit’s cot,
Though its tenant may be quite forgot
By all the world, by every friend ;
Yet there the darkened past will blend
Its sadd’ning influence with the hour,
And dimly o’er the future lour ;
’Tis not in the rosy cup, though there
We may perchance o’erwhelm despair—
But the lethe of wine, oh ! ’tis not peace,
Nor from one care doth it release ;
’Tis not in the feast, the gallant throng,
Where music thrills, where bursts the song,
Where pleasure reigns—oh ! ’tis not there,
Though grief sometimes a mask may wear—
’Mid all these scenes, I’ve sought in vain
To soothe and calm my memory’s pain,
And, wearied with the chase, I gave
It o’er; naught but the silent grave
M’ thought can quell my aching breast,
And give my heart its long’d for rest.

“ Yet ere I yielded to despair,
A thought stole o’er me there, yes, there.
Religion may a refuge prove :
Blest with the peace which reigns above,

I yet may calmly hide my doom,
And seek through halcyon rest my tomb.
I chose St. David's holy shrine—
There join'd the rites man deems divine,
With pater nosters, masses, aves,
And ev'ry formula that saves
That which monks say within our graves
Is buried not, but lives again,
The hidden essence of the brain.
Where floats the Alun's gentle tide,
Upon its banks, and close beside,
Are rear'd St. David's holy walls,
Its cloister'd shades and college halls,
Deep in the hollow vale, where sleep
The very winds, and zephyrs keep
A guardian watch through midnight's hour,
O'er pointed spire and hallowed tower.

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“At first a change came o'er my soul,
I fancied I had found the goal
Long look'd for ardently, and rest
Seem'd hov'ring o'er my wearied breast ;
On silky pinion not possess'd,
Yet still almost my bosom's guest.
I loved to join the midnight mass,
How soothingly the sounds would pass
In silv'ry waves along the aisle,
Soft echoing through the noble pile,
Then gently stealing on the air,
Would float the seraph voice of prayer,

And fancy saw it still ascending,
Through radiant seas of ether wending,
Until the gates of heav'n were won,
It wreath'd in incense round the throne.

“ Thus sweetly pass'd the nights away,
But shunn'd I e'er the glance of day,
Save as it stole in solemn shade,
As in the cloisters arch'd I prayed,
Or meditated, till the time
Proclaim'd again the midnight's prime.
Then sometimes I would roam abroad,
But ever lay my midnight road
(When the clear moon on high was gleaming,
Or stars upon the stream were beaming)
Where the dark shade of buildings fell
Thickest and darkest o'er the dell.
The moon and stars, though soft their light,
Yet ever seem'd for me too bright,
If all unclouded, as I stray'd
Where ceased the gloomy solemn shade ;
But when thus shielded I could gaze
Upon the moon's reflected rays—
For the shadow seem'd akin to me,
In union with misery.
There was a friendship in the gloom,
A sadness for the sorrowing, whom
Fate had blasted ; and the light
Of the pale radiant Queen of Night

Recall'd those days, when joy was mine,
Ere happiness had known decline.

“Days, weeks, months pass'd away, but still
Upon my wounded heart a chill
Weight sat, as if a venom'd toad
Had chosen it for its abode.
I found not peace, but a relief,
Or rather a reprieve, from grief;
But not that sweet repose it proved,
The which to paint my fancy loved
Was the result of cloister'd rest.
I found that there the human breast
Remain'd unchang'd—that yet the world,
This ocean stream of life, still curl'd
With its pestif'rous breath. I found
Letters and learning deep profound,
But what I'd dream'd of holiness,
Such as the bosom might possess,
Proved but a dream: contention's strife
Absorbed the monastery's life—
Ambition, the chief road they trod—
And mammon their belovèd god.
Nor were the softer sins denied
Their influence on the vital tide—
And woman played her mighty part
To charm and soothe the cloister'd heart.

“I ponder'd deeper, deeper still,
'Twas long repugnant to my will

The truth to own—but learnt I then
How strong a web the sons of men
Had wound around their dolted brains ;
And skilfully religion's chains
The monks employed to bind on earth
All that they deem'd of need or worth.
Religion, as the church profess'd,
Was holiness, my heart confess'd—
But as she practised it, I saw
The wild delusion ; yet the law
By her dictated, men obeyed,
Who deem'd they had souls to be saved.
When bursts upon the darken'd mind
The light of truth, how few we find
Who do not dwell in darkness still,
They dearly love it, and they will
Continue to be blind, and hate,
Despise, a more enlightened state.
Oh ! it is mournful, humbling, too,
When with a mind illum'd, we view
The fettered masses toil as slaves,
And sink in darkness to their graves,
Fools yoked as oxen, uncomplaining,
Struggling, toiling, sweating, straining.
Thus tear religion's mask away,
Expose it to the light of day
In all its vile hypocrisy,
Make evident the fearful lie—
And who will thank you ?—who, yes, who
Of all the superstitious crew

Which form mankind? when stripp'd and bare
They see the comfort of their fear,
The arch on which they'd bridge the sea
That leads to blest eternity.

“ Yes, men are cowards in the mass—
They fear to fathom truths unknown;
Through death's dark portal all must pass,
Yet dread to think all life is flown,
When they beneath the verdant sod,
Who may on earth as kings have trod,
By Fate's decree, as e'en they must,
Dissolve into a heap of dust,
And cheat themselves they will become
The tenants of a brighter home.—
Yes, men are cowards or are fools,
Through life the passion's blinded tools;
If not the last, they give the lie
Flatly to immortality.
And thus—a course of life is given,
Which the church says doth lead to heav'n;
One narrow road—no more—and those
Who do not walk therein God's foes
Are deem'd, and damn'd. Now mark—mankind
Singly, collectively, we find,
With few exceptions, hurry on
The road which leads to hell alone.
This proves them fools—for what on earth—
All that we deem of priceless worth—

E'en if obtain'd, and then retained,
If heaven be lost while these are gained,
What are they when compared with life
Eternal, free from sin and strife,
With more of bliss than man can know,
Or dream of in this state of woe?
Will the exceptions prove that we
Are born to live eternally?
Think'st thou the masses of mankind
Were formed from which the few refined
Alone are destined to enjoy
Those heavenly pleasures which ne'er cloy?
Nay—the thought's injustice, all sleep
For ever in a slumber deep.
Then let us bravely yield our breath,
And firmly meet the monster, Death.

“I had one pleasure, and but one—
Oft when the morning mass was done,
I'd roam among the tombs, and read
Th' inscriptions o'er the silent dead:
Some merely said that those beneath
Had lived, and that they slept in death:
These were the wisest, and yet these
Were proofs of that wide spread disease
Of mind—that wish to leave behind
A name—a nothing—which mankind
Still grasps at, as the phantom flies,
And sneering the vain hope denies—

These records that they lived and died,
Seem'd one long parody on pride;
Their lives mere arrow flights, which cleave
Swiftly the yielding air, but leave
No traces of the course they flew,
As they shot through the ether blue.
Then there were others, whom the pen
Or chisel made the best of men,
Or wisest, bravest, if perchance
They might have borne a glitt'ring lance;
Or if in letters they had dipp'd,
And tiny drops of knowledge sipp'd;
Each was enough, an epitaph
To frame, and make a cynic laugh.
I doubt not that some were honest
Who beneath had found their rest,
And if to life they could arise
Would blush to read their elegies.
And sometimes I would smile almost,
To see how folly to the last
Clings to the human race, it winds
Like ivy round our feeble minds,
And flourishes while its support
Has sunk beneath the sounding "mort."
The sculptured follies on each tomb,
Half hidden in the misty gloom,
Of those who would perpetuate
By this alone, their deeds and fate;
The crowning weakness seemed to me
Such pitiable vanity.

Oh, wherefore grave those brazen lies,
Since fate from earliest time denies
A reputation, but to those
Who've earn'd it: neither can we close
Against the great, in good or crime,
Fame's temple gate, for future time
Shall judge them, as each public deed
Deserves our hate or merits meed.
The fallen whom we should lament
Need no sepulchral monument—
Within the heart they live enshrined,
Their tablet is the human mind.

“ Sometimes I'd watch a grave, and mark
The hoary sexton at his work,
As he o'erturn'd the soil which kept
The ashes of the dead who'd slept
So long, that now the flesh, and bone,
And earth beneath the aisle, were one ;
A strangely mingled mass of soil,
Which even worms disdain'd as spoil,
Save when with moaning sound, and dull,
Would roll upon the aisle a skull,
Which did in life, perchance, contain
A holy bishop's lettered brain—
And here and there around would lie
Some remnant of mortality,
Greeting my gaze—discordant parts,
Of doubtless more discordant hearts.

I learnt from those dry bits of bones,
More than an age of sermons
Could impart, on that vast theme,
Man—as creation's lord supreme.
A stern rebuke the mass conveyed,
To all on which our hopes are staid;
There priest, and friend, and enemy,
Together in one cemetery,
The wise, the fool, deformity,
And lov'liness commingled lie,
A mass, of what? mortality !
I gazed attentively, no form
Of life was there, no bursting germ,
No promise of a verdant spring.
No, that was pass'd—the mighty sting
Of death had poison'd all beneath;
The dust seem'd murm'ring—this is death.

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“ Oft I revolved the thought again,
Is this a fancy of my brain ?
My mind still answered from its gloom,
Annihilation is thy doom.
I sought the confirmation—I
Found it in humanity
Graven undoubtedly—and thus
It ran—two principles guide us,
Evil and good, and these we find
Sway each alternately the mind.
Whence then have these their hidden sources ?
Where is the well-spring of these forces ?

Is it in man himself? look deep,
Does his fair form the rootlets keep?
E'en grant it, deeper search his form,
And ask—did he implant the germ?
Nay, nay, thy reason tells thee, no!
Man knows not whence his passions grow;
When first the mind doth thought impart,
He finds them verdant in his heart,
Just as he finds his frame to be
Perfect in strength and symmetry,
Or fashion'd in deformity.

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Without the power to change the past,
Such as he's born, he dies at last.
Thus reason proves, with ill and good
Mankind are from their births endued;
Powerless o'er each, as chance or fate
Determines their predestined state.
It is not of himself he falls,
And this the trembling mind appals:
That ere the earth through ether roll'd,
That sin should its fair form enfold,
Was known as plainly, as that we
Know that it rules humanity.
Thus good and ill were born ere earth,
Much less mankind, had known its birth;
And justice tells the thinking heart,
The end of each is not apart.
Then all our race shall live in bliss,
And taste eternal happiness;

But this thou wilt at once deny,
As I do, immortality.

“Formed for some purpose strange and dark,
The offspring of a mighty work,
Man on this earth is doom'd to dwell,
Wherefore, my reason cannot tell,
Save that 'tis fate, and we must bear
Of good and misery our share.
Unequally determined: still
He conquers most whose mighty will
Defiance bids to what may be
Stored in thy depths, “Futurity.”
No coward feelings damp my heart,
No hope its influence doth impart,
No power my giant will can bend
From working out my destined end.
Firm as those rocks above us tow'ring,
Dark as the cloud around us louring,
Is my determination—all
Desire this feeling doth enthral:
For vengeance! vengeance! live I now—
 To see him quiv'ring at my feet—
To see the death damps chill his brow—
 Then will my bosom be replete
With all of joy which it can know—
If it be joy, to mark the flow
Of the dark life stream drop by drop,
Until the beating pulse doth stop,

And quivering limbs grow stiff and cold.
It is not joy—it is untold,
Or rather words are all too weak,
The depth of gluttred hate to speak.
This granted, this desire won,
My task will with my life be done,
And dust to earth, and breath to air,
Thus will my form its future wear;
A mass dissolved, a vanish'd breath,
Such, such is Tewdwr's faith in death."

The list'ner sat, and silently
Heard the fierce outlaw breathe his tale,
Then answered only with a sigh,
Like the first moanings of the gale.
There is a power in sympathy,
Which soft'ning soothes the sternest breast;
To feel another's heart is nigh,
Where pity is a welcome guest,
Is a sweet balm to grief and woe,
The sweetest which the soul can know.
The first bright ray of solar light,
When storms have triumph'd through the night,
Is far more welcome to the eye
Than days and months of brilliancy
To him who dwells where gloomy clouds,
Never the day or night enshrouds;
And those who've pass'd along through life,
In ignorance of the passion's strife,

Who ne'er have felt of grief and woe,
Such as the heart of man may know ;
Who ne'er the misery have known,
Of suff'ring day by day alone,
Without a friend to joy or cheer,
Or render dark despair less drear,
Cannot in fancy feel the thrill
Which all the heart and soul doth fill,
When one who thus has suffer'd, knows
Another's heart with pity glows.

“ Thou sighest, Owain,” said the chief,
“ I thank thee—’tis a sweet relief
To know, compassion may be felt
For the detested, outlaw’d Celt.”
“ Compassion! chieftain—who can hear
Thy tale, and yet refrain the tear?
But grieve I less thy ills to learn,
For though their smarting pain may burn,
Yet these are nothing, when I know
There’s an eternity of woe ;
Thy want of faith, thy dark belief,
Afford me deepest cause for grief.
Thou smilest that a youth should dare
Combat thy knowledge, but I fear
No powers of mind, no sophistry
Against the truth can weigh with me,
Truths which have with my stature grown,
Till I have made their joys my own.

I'd heard—but doubted—there were some
Abortions of our race, to whom
Reveal'd religion brought despair;
Who sought a refuge from their fear
In dread annihilation's doom
Who had no hope beyond the tomb;
But ne'er have met with one, till thou
Boasted that dark curse stamp'd thy brow:
But I cannot behold thee sink
Without an effort—from the brink
Of horror let me save thee—pause,
Ponder the scheme of nature's laws,
Thy fatal doubts again resift,
And learn to know th' immortal gift.

“God thou acknowledgest—'tis well:

Reason proclaims Him ev'rywhere
As God—reason again will tell,

He has made all things good and fair;

As God, he must be perfect—then

That principle known unto men

As virtue, must be His—as He

The essence is of purity—

Can virtue err, or falt'ring change?

On the confines of evil range?

Nay, reason cries—then I would ask,

Is it a part of virtue's task,

To cause, much less promote, the birth

Of sin and misery on earth?

“Where’er the pasture to the herds
Luxuriant foliage affords,
They live contented, have no fear,
The future cannot wring a tear,
Nor think of death and scanty fare,
Enjoy the present free from care:
Then wherefore, if as brutes we die,
Are we with stern fore-knowledge curst—
To feel that dark futurity
Contains a cloud, which, when ’tis burst,
May sweep for ever from our sight
The stars which cheer our living night?
What power of goodness would apprise
Men of their fearful destinies?
Teach them that friends must pass away,
That pain must harrow night and day;
That e’en our pleasures are impure,
And naught but ill doth long endure?
Mercy would make us brutes in all,
While Justice would outspread a pall
To hide the morrow’s misty gloom,
And clothe in night the future’s doom,
If man was formed to live but here,
And never grace a higher sphere.
As such, God man did not endow,
Immortal shines upon thy brow—
’Tis graven in thy heart of hearts,
And all false wisdom e’er imparts,
Is but to teach to quench the fires
Which heavenly truth within inspires.

Behold the peasant and the thrall,
Their simple faith might thee appal;
They need no knowledge to awake
The truth of an immortal stake.
What, then, shall man but rise from earth,
With thoughts of only mundane birth,
When angels claim him in the skies,
And hail his birth with ecstacies?

“Now mark the links of nature’s chain,
How each returns to life again—
How verdure dies, but does not perish,
Save but new foliage to nourish.
See how the brutes which form our food,
And are, thou say’st, as man endued,
They die not, but new forms assume,
As verdure bright, or flower’s bloom—
And thus revolving, change they still,
Or clothe, or crop the em’rald hill.
Shall men, who are creation’s lords,
Be not superior to the herds,
But sink when sounds the trumpet’s blast,
Monarchs in life, yet beasts at last?
Again call reason to thy aid,
Will she still say, thus men are made?

“Hast thou e’er watch’d the flowing tide,
And mark’d upon the dark rock’s side,
The sea flower with its petals red,
To meet the coming wave outspread?

This links the creatures of the flood
With the bright flowers of lea and wood;
Where sports the dolphin, lightly there
The fin-wing'd fish springs high in air—
The link which joins the feather'd race,
To those which ocean's billows grace;
When day is shrinking into eve,
On dusky wing the bat doth leave
His secret roost—a link again,
'Twixt birds and beasts, in nature's chain;
Ascending higher still we find
The chain continuing to bind,
For men have e'en their counterparts,
In face and form, if not in hearts.
Say, wilt thou end the series here?
No higher course can fancy steer,
For reason tells thee that the chain,
Creation's noblest end should gain,
Or it imperfect must remain. }
Is there no link 'tween heav'n and earth,
No mortal and immortal birth—
Does nothing bridge the deep abyss,
All of that world—or all of this?
Has God in his creative task
Paus'd in his work, my heart doth ask?
And nature, reason, answers, Nay!
Man is not all of mould'ring clay,
Creation's master-piece is he,
His death, is immortality.

“ Even suppose our judgments err,
Would man a happier aspect wear,
If he consented to thy scheme,
Confess’d eternal life a dream?
Nay, rather ’tis this hope that cheers,
That lightens life and dries our tears ;
It is, in fact, the only tie
Which firmly binds society.
Brutes need no laws, their appetites
Suffice to regulate their rights ;
But who can paint the anarchy,
Should truth and honour, virtue die—
Yet why should they exist, if man
Lives not beyond this mortal span?
’Twere wiser far to taste on earth,
Each passion, lust, of hellish birth :
Wherefore restrain ourselves in aught,
Our end the same, summ’d up in ‘ naught?’
But reason prompts me to reply,
Existence, proves eternity :
O, why then soar above thy kind?
Where is the grandeur of thy mind?
Since thou ascendest but to prove
That mere ephemerals we move—
How wise to rack with thought the brain,
To learn our dearest hopes are vain !
My bosom sickens with disgust,
To think thou deemest man but dust :
O better live in ignorance !
The darkest doth our worth enhance,

Compared to those hell flames which light
The thought to realms of endless night.
O! leave, leave that which doth debase,
For that which elevates our race;
'Tis no vain dream, the heavens proclaim
Man has a never-dying name—
Then choose that path, that holy road,
Which leads the immortal soul to God.”

“ But one more proof, though proofs arise,
That speech their utterance denies;
So swiftly as the billows roll,
Their flood of light illumines my soul.
Why are we discontented here?
The priest, the peasant, and the peer
Can find no resting-place, no home,
Where discontentment will not come.
Some power is urging us still on,
Until the sought-for end is won;
Won not on earth—the victor wept,
Ambition's bounds he had o'erstepp'd,
Of ev'ry cherish'd hope bereft,
Of worlds to conquer, none were left;
The Roman from his empire's throne,
Saw all the humbled globe his own;
He'd reach'd earth's highest pinnacle,
And then he murmur'd—Is this all?
Why is it? 'tis the heavenly spark
Which feels earth's brightest light is dark.

All that this life can offer—all
When quaff'd, satiety will pall;
'Rest' is an habitant on high,
It crowns blest immortality.

"Not yet convinced—stern chief, arise,
And gaze upon the midnight skies,
Which now above us are outspread,
And canopy our rocky bed.
Then tell me that thou deemest man,
(Who of creation's mighty plan,
Alone the universe can scan,
And read full clearly in the sky,
His Maker's awful majesty,)
Is doom'd to taste, but never feel,
All that creation can reveal:
Oh! cast that gloomy faith away,
It is the offspring of thy clay,
Debasing—louring, damning too,
Oh! shake it off; with clearer view,
Thy hopes of happiness renew;
Read in our race, the earth, the sky,
The truth of man's eternity.
Lo! where from yonder eastern sea,
The moon, in silent majesty,
Seems like the ghost of some dead globe,
Attired in its grave-yard robe
To judgment rising—see yon star
Approaching to the fearful bar

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A trembling witness—still and clear
The universe—the hush of fear
Seems to oppress creation—night
Is in silence list'ning, as though
It deem'd its doom determined now,
And time had ta'en its long last flight.
This fancy makes me tremble. God!
When thou, t' avenge thy martyr's blood,
In awful majesty shalt rise,
Wearied with men's iniquities,
Thy trump the silence deep shall break,
And unto judgment mortals wake:
On that last awful day.
How changed will be the scene—each ray
Of light extinguish'd, save the world
A self-consuming furnace, hurl'd
On to its destruction. And this
Earth, in th' immeasurable abyss
Shall seem a spark—and then around,
Above, beneath—the vast profound,
Swift as the lightning cleaves the air,
A burst of brilliancy shall be;
Throned in the midst will God appear,
To judge mankind in majesty.
Angels, archangels, heaven's peers,
Their great Creator's messengers,
Darting from the confines of space,
Shall marshal all our trembling race
Before His bar—when we shall know,
If bliss is ours—or endless woe."

CANTO THE THIRD.

“Where lingers Owain? ’Tis the hour
He used to seek my native bower:
But now the sun’s last beaming ray
Has long since bid farewell to day;
The twilight’s shade is deep’ning still,
And less distinct grows wood and hill,
While night is stealing o’er the wold.
The heavens their beauties now unfold;
Yet never did the stars peep forth,
With radiant softness, o’er the earth,
Ere we, upon our trysting eve,
Had met to love—o’er fate to grieve.”
Her ancient nurse, who sat beside,
With tender softness thus replied:
“Be not impatient, Ladye, yet;
Dost thou so soon, fair child, forget?
Five days have not yet pass’d away
Since the dark Tewdwr’s wild foray,
And that thy sire, with Owain’s, too,
Has sworn to hunt the outlaw crew
Till not a Kymry robber’s head
Sleeps but upon a gory bed;

And thy betrothed will doubtless ride
With them to tame the wild Chief's pride.
Why is thy lover's absence mourned,
The while thy sire has not return'd?"
"Has not return'd!" she echo'd. "Then
Perchance, in some dark mountain glen,
A mangled corpse my Owain lies,
Or tortur'd with dread agonies.
O God, forbid it!" while the tears
Flow freely at her woman's fears.
"Fool that I am!" exclaim'd her nurse;
"My rambling tongue—would that a curse
Might wither it! My darling child,"
For such her mistress oft she styled,
"Grieve, grieve not thus—ere midnight's hour
He yet may reach thy lonely tower;
For, hark! it is the bugle blast,
As round the hill thy sire sweeps past—
Soon shalt thou hear the ringing note
Of drawbridge falling o'er the moat.
Then dry thy eyes, subdue thy fears,
And don that lovely smile which cheers
Thy parent's saddest, darkest hour
With little less than witch's power."

Thus to De Lacy's daughter fair,
The object of her life-long care—
For she had ta'en a mother's part,
And loved her with a mother's heart—

Spoke her companion, on whose breast
Was hush'd the infant's hours of rest ;
And though long years had pass'd away,
Yet thought she as on that sad day,
When from her maniac mother's grasp,
Whose arms her offspring did enclasp
With murd'rous thought, the child she tore,
And to a place of safety bore ;
She'd watch'd her op'ning loveliness
As each day saw her charms increase,
Until a lovely woman grown
Became the child she call'd her own.

Change is the watchword of the world,
Since first chaotic rocks were hurl'd,
A shapeless mass of smould'ring stone,
Ere yet Creation was begun—
Nature and Time in cycles run,
Their goal of rest is never won,
Still onward to return again,
Renewing the exhaustless chain.
Ceaseless the changes of the year,
Ceaseless the changes of the sky,
Changed though the same again appear,
As swiftly still away to fly.
But change renewing is more sweet,
With more of hope and joy replete,
Than its dark brother, change decaying,
Men, verdure, nature, all things slaying.

Spring, with its dreams of plenty, smiling,
The human heart with hope beguiling,
Is lovelier far to gaze upon
Than Autumn with its hues of dun.
How beautiful the setting sun!

Yet oft it wakes the sadd'ning thought
Ere it its midnight course has run,

I e'en may be a thing of nought.
Not so when all the stars decline,
Till Lucifer alone doth shine,
The courier of the faint light gray,
Which heralds the approach of day.
Mark, from some tow'ring mountain's brow,
How light steals o'er the vale below,

How the dark shades are lost in air,
And dewdrops glisten on the bough,

The gems of nature, bright and fair,
As in the rising sun they glow ;
While song-birds, on the leafy sprays,
With luscious sweetness, chaunt their lays,
And flowers from ev'ry hill and vale
Diffuse their odours on the gale:
It glads the soul, it cheers the heart—
The morning's beauty doth impart
A brighter hope, a sweeter thrill,
Than evening stealing o'er the hill.
Oft have I watch'd the sunbeams gay,
When, on the western sky, the day
Seem'd like a conquer'd giant bleeding,
Whose flood of life was fast receding,

And dyeing with its gory stain
The field where he had fought in vain.
Anon, methought as though the west
Was deck'd, with sanguine banners hung,
The bier on which the day did rest
In death all glorious—as are flung
The silken folds o'er those who die,
The gallant sons of victory ;
But ever as I've watch'd the day,
With morning's tints of red or gray,
Fancy would paint the victor's car
Rushing to an immortal war.

There is no purer joy on earth,
No pleasure of such priceless worth,
Than day by day, and hour by hour,
To watch the opening human flower,
In loveliness and mind expanding,
Ever more anxious care demanding :
So Gwendolen, from year to year, }
Had watch'd in Gertrude's form appear }
Each charm and grace, as bright and clear
As star succeeding star on high, }
Shine, one by one, till all the sky }
Is radiant in brilliancy,
Nor perfect is the heavenly sphere
Till all unto the least appear.
Her oval face was clearly pale,
But softly as the summer gale,

Or summer sea, would ebb and flow
A faint and almost hectic glow.

'Neath eyebrows arch'd, her violet eye,
Deep as the blue of midnight sky

When the young moon has sunk to rest
On heaven's ocean swimmingly,

Stars on the ambient ether's breast,
Reign purely bright and brightly fair,
Gems of the soothing, balmy air.

Her form below the middle height,
With rounded limbs, and step as light
As roebuck o'er the od'rous heath.

Soft as the zephyrs came her breath,
When they o'er beds of roses sweep,
And in their fragrance gently steep
Their sighing sweetness as they come
From their delicious fairy home.

Beside her cheek, in bands that graced,
Her silky auburn hair was traced,

And no bright gem or ornament,
Its glitt'ring aid factitious lent,

Save one sweet flower, a lily fair,
Was blended in her braided hair;

Her lovely iv'ry arms were bare,
A golden bracelet clasp'd the right,

Form'd only of the metal bright,
Which proudly seem'd to clasp that arm,
But did not add a single charm.

It was her lover's gift, and now,

Her eyes regard it earnestly,

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While heaves and falls her breast of snow,
And tear-drops glisten in her eye.
But, hark ! along the gallery
Her father's step is echoing nigh ;
Hush'd is the sigh so lately breathed,
In welcome smiles her lips are wreathed—
But coldly her stern sire receives
The greeting warm his daughter gives.

She mark'd his brow was dark as night,
Read there the fortune of the fight ;
Upon his breast the trace of blood,
Which from a deep indent had flow'd,
Soon caught her gaze. That look he saw—
“It must,” he said, “have been a flaw
Within the steel ; be not alarm'd,
'Tis but a scratch, I am unharm'd.
Yet curse upon that mountaineer,
Who hurl'd so savagely that spear ;
A curse,” he cried, “upon the day,
Which saw me beaten in the fray.
Yes, child, for vanquish'd I return,
When fierce revenge I'd deeply sworn.”
He sank in silence, till at last,
The darkest of his gloom was past,
Then turning to his daughter fair,
With more of sadness in his air,
“Where is thy lute, and song so gay ?
Now troll me forth a roundelay.”
Her sire's command at once obeyed,
And these the words to which she play'd :

Romaunt of the Wandering Knight.

“ There’s glimm’ring on the Arno’s stream,
Nor the soft light of the moon-beam,
Nor yet the stars, the night is mirk,
And heav’n’s concave is densely dark.
’Tis the wizard’s lamp whose gentle light
Shines on the swift flood hurrying by,
Illuming the room where the man of might
Pursues his spells and phantasie.
His robe is dark, his locks are gray,
His form is bent with thought and years;
Around him in confused array,
Full many a parchment scroll appears.
Another stately form is there,
In armour clad from head to heel,
His right hand holds a pointed spear,
While glistens bright the polish’d steel.
His surcoat bears a dragon red,
With barbed tail, and wings display’d,
And from his casque a plume is spread ;
Thus was the warrior knight array’d.
At length he to the wizard spoke,
‘ Thy mighty skill, thy wond’rous fame,
The echo of far lands has woke,
So well is known Agrippa’s name.

'Tis said thou cans't the past recall,
Then let me prove thy wond'rous power ;
Oh, tear aside oblivion's pall,
The time be it my bridal hour.
Let me behold her form again,
Though Time's dark gulf between is wide,
And in the grave she long hath lain,
Yet once more I would see my bride.'

"The lamp extinguish'd in the room,
No light illum'd the pitchy gloom ;
Then like the sunrise, but more bright,
Burst from an unseen source a light,
So clear, so brilliant day might be
E'en paled by its intensity.
Before them, and extending wide,
A noble mirror now was seen ;
But o'er it misty wreaths did hide
Its surface from their glances keen ;
In gentle tones which thrill'd again,
The wizard chaunted forth this strain.

" ' Shades of the past ! though now roaming in
night,
I bid ye resume your gay garments of light,
Ere ye knew that decay could erase from the
earth
The time, and the name, and the thought of
your birth.

“ ‘Shades of the past! now reposing in
slumbers,

Hear the soft strains of the wizard's wild
numbers,

Spread your wide wings from oblivion's dark
sea,

Wake from your rev'ries, I bid ye be free.

“ ‘Shades of the past! from the sad dust of
ages

Start to new life, your bright robes assume,
The hour now fleeting, your presence engages,
I bid ye awake from the past's mighty
gloom.’

“ Agrippa seized an ebon wand:

‘Warrior, I wait for thy command,’

He said; ‘each time I wave,

Recalls ten years from Time's dark grave.”

The wand described four hundred years,

Yet still the magic mirror wears

The same mysterious cloudy wreath,

And naught was visible beneath.

The wizard pausing, dropp'd his wand:

‘Wave on! wave on!’ was the command.

The wand had mark'd six centuries,

When as the clouds before the breeze,

The mist swept by, and roll'd away;

When pictured in the mirror, lay

Upon a couch a ladye fair,
With bright blue eyes and auburn hair,
Behind, a train of maidens were—
Though all were lovely, none were there,
Who with their mistress could compare.
'Tis Gwenhivir ! my beauteous bride.
Oh, wherefore am I now denied
To linger once more by thy side,
To kiss again thy heavenly face,
And press thee in a warm embrace?
The warrior rush'd his bride to clasp,
Vain is the magician's grasp,
He burst away, but ere he gain'd
The magic mirror, naught remain'd—
The mist return'd, the form had gone,
He sank to earth as life had flown.
Agrippa bore him from the ground,
His vizor raised, with skill profound
Some drops within his mouth he pour'd,
Which soon the warrior restor'd.
He look'd not old, nor young was he;
It seem'd as time had ceased to be
With him, as with the human race,
So strangely beautiful his face.
Pale as the marble of the south,
Save the deep red which dy'd his mouth.
His locks were brown, but here and there,
Wander'd a lonely silver hair,
Which even some in youth possess,
Yet mars it not their loveliness.

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Declined at once the proffer'd gold,
 Agrippa said, ' To me unfold
 Thy wond'rous life, its history,
 More valued than reward will be.'
 ' I'm one,' he cried, ' whom destiny
 Has forced to roam by land and sea;
 Until a thousand years shall pass,
 I cannot cease my weary race.
 But then, ' oh, Heaven, speed the hour !'
 I shall regain my regal power,
 And seated on the British throne,
 Claim the fair islands all my own.
 The lonely Wand'ring Knight am I,
 Arthur, the Prince of Chivalry.'
 He closed his vizor, bow'd his head,
 And quickly from th' apartment sped."

" Why choose this theme ?" her father cried ;
 " Am I beneath my roof defied,
 That the wild dreams of this wild race,
 My child's fond fancy shall embrace ?
 Forget such themes ; now wake again
 A livelier, more poetic strain."
 Once more the lovely trembling maid,
 Her parent's harsh command obeyed.

Song.

“ Sweet echo, sweet echo, where is thy home ;
Oh, where is thy birth-place sweet ?
Dost thou dwell where arises the busy hum,
And is heard the tramp of feet ?

“ Sweet echo, sweet echo, dost thou then live
In the halls of regal pride,
Where monarchs and princes their banquets give,
And the red wine flows a tide ?

“ Sweet echo, sweet echo, why dost thou shun
The homes of the mortal race ?
Oh, why dost thou ever thus dwell alone,
And the scenes of mirth ne’er grace ?

“ I love, dost thou whisper ? the lonely glen,
’Mid the rocks and woods to be,
And I welcome there the fair sons of men,
When they come by two or three.

“ I love, dost thou whisper ? the shepherd’s note,
And the sound of the wild cascade,
When their gentle tones on the breeze doth
float,
In zephyrs bright array’d.

“ And I love the song of the wild wood bird,
And the step of the bounding goat,
And when ’neath the dark rock the sound is heard,
Of the oar which speeds the boat.

“ And I love to listen at early morn,
 When still is the gentle air,
To the cheering sound of the hunters’ note,
 As they seek the wild deer’s lair.

“ I wander at times in forsaken halls,
 To me a mournful home,
As I number how oft the lone foot falls,
 Of the stranger who there may come.

“ I love not the castle’s ruin’d tower,
 Where gloom around is spread,
Which tells a mute tale of forgotten power,
 Of the mighty who are dead.

“ For the wailing shriek of the midnight ghost,
 As it bursts on my startled ear,
Is the sound of all others I hate the most,
 It is so wild, so drear.

“ The haunts of mankind, or present, or past,
 Are the saddest homes for me ;
When my lot in the woodlands and wilds is
 cast,
’Tis there I love to be.

“ Then echo, sweet echo, farewell to thee,
 Thy best loved homes I’ll seek,
On the hills, in the glens, or the forest free,
 Where nature’s voices speak.”

"Thanks, daughter! though thy minstrelsy
 Chimes with my soul less merrily
 Than in the by-gone days—mirth jars
 Upon my heart; life's struggles, cares,
 Weigh heavier than their wont." He paused,
 And then resumed—"E'en thou hast caused
 Much troubled thought." "I, father?" "Yes!
 T' insure thy future happiness."
 He gazed upon his daughter's face—
 "Thou art the last of a long race,
 And I would see thee, as a bride,
 Linger by some proud noble's side."

High rose and fell the maiden's breast,
 As hope and fear by turn impress'd
 Their influence on her heart: her sire
 Mark'd but knew not the hidden fire.
 "Yes," he continued, "there is one
 Well worthy of thy hand, the son
 Of a most ancient house, and he
 Sole scion of a noble tree.
 Thy speaking eyes his name demand,
 Hugh Fitzhurse, of the 'Blazing Brand.'"
 Loud through the room a wild shout rang,
 As bounding to her feet she sprang:
 "The coward monster, I his bride—
 The grave my mould'ring form shall hide,
 And at my head the mossy stone,
 Ere he shall claim me as his own!—

Why taunt me, dearest father? why
Dost thou look on exultingly?
Is it to prove thy daughter's nerve?
Know from her word she will not swerve;
And thus I swear, by all above,
I will not grant that man my love!
My love! my more than life—my all.
A captive wretch, a fetter'd thrall,
Victim of torture would I be,
Than wed that son of infamy.
That hoary miscreant, he my lord!
Father, revoke thy plighted word—
By ev'ry hope thou holdest dear
In earth or heaven—or stab me here!”

De Lacy shook with rage: he cried—
“Am I, thy parent, thus defied!
Know, minion, that my plighted troth
Is fettered by a fearful oath,
And were he e'en of demon race,
My child his nuptial couch shall grace.
In vain thy tears, thy prayers, thy sighs,
Thy fate, or doom, all change denies:
Shall all my fostered hopes of power
Be crushed, be blasted, in an hour;
All that on earth for which I've fought
Be in a moment brought to nought;
Shall every dream be hushed for ever—
My soul's ambition sated never?

Because a child, rebellious cries—
Oh ! make me not a sacrifice !
Fool ! wert thou even twice as near,
If wound around my heart, I'd tear
Thy grasp asunder, and I'd hurl
Thee from me, as the torrents whirl
The bubbles on their breast ; thou must,
Thou shalt thy parent know—as dust
In the balance of my aims, thou
Art esteem'd ; thou shalt therefore bow
Thy haughty neck, and bear the yoke—
Thy fate no power can revoke.”
He left the room with haughty stride,
Mutt'ring, “ De Lacy be denied !”

“ Life of my soul,” a soft voice cried,
“ My loved, my pledged, my destined bride,
Cheer thy sad heart ; do not forget,
There's one on earth who loves thee yet.”
Thus Owain whispered, as he sprung
The casement through, and round her flung
His arms. “ My drooping bird,
My trembling flower, these ears have heard
Thy parent's doom ; but cheer thee, love
There's hope on earth, and time will prove
Thy lot is not so dark and drear
As now thy future doth appear.
Oh, dry those tears, suppress those sighs,
And still thy bosom's agonies.

Think, though we both may suffer, still
The fatal blow two graves would fill ;
And life eternal would not prove
Too long to satisfy our love.
Now this the worst decree of fate,
Our souls can calmly contemplate
And still be happy, for my heart,
Gertrude, from thee can never part,
Nor do I think that thou couldst be
Long on the earth removed from me.
As two clear streams, which spring alone
When their young course is but begun,
Soon as their floods confluent run,
They rush for ever on, as one,
Mingle together in the sea—
Thus we shall reach eternity.

“ What is it now that damps thy heart,
That causes this convulsive start ?
An unjust parent’s dream of pride,
By love of honour, worth, denied.
Were I unknown, and wert thou free,
Yet still it would be infamy
Thyself to offer at the shrine
Of avarice ; ’twould be to join,
To aid, abet, and foster sin. }
Thou still dost grieve—have I then lost
That which on earth I valued most ?
The power to charm thee when we met,
And all the world in me forget.”

She softly raised her swimming eyes ;
“ Thank God,” she murmur’d, “ fate denies
Me not, the one support which now
Can stay my soul to bear this blow.

Owain, could aught make thee more dear,

’Tis that thou hast the power to cheer

And soothe the anguish of the smart,

Which rankles in my bursting heart.

The angels, when they fell from high,

And downward cleft the yielding sky,

Could feel no more of agony

Than I within an hour have known,

Hurl’d from a pinnacle of bliss,

Which I had fondly deem’d my own,

To writhe in grief’s profound abyss ;

Deeming myself without a foe,

That all who knew me loved me well—

And then my sire to strike that blow,

Doth ev’ry hope of joy dispel.

Though he was dark, morose, and stern,

Yet did my bosom ever burn

With filial love, as pure and clear

As ever warm’d an orphan breast ;

Though awe, deepen’d sometimes to fear,

My timid, trembling heart impress’d.

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“ He was not harsh, and neither kind,

But this, to my maturer mind,

Seem’d the effect of the wild life

He led in scenes of border strife.

Yet I was happy, and was gay,
With tambour work and roundelay ;
Anon a gallop on the lea
In the brave sport of falconry ;
Nor knew I wanted something yet
To perfect bliss, until we met.
Our trusting spirits speak the rest,
'Tis graven in each other's breast.
The past has been a lovely dream,
A night celestial, where no gleam
Of day has shone, the thought to wake
Stern life on such a dream could break—
A summer sky where clouds ne'er meet—
A summer sea where billows sleep—
A vision with each part complete—
A moonlight eve, when fairies keep
Their revelry—a time of peace,
When the heart knows no weariness.

“ Owain, my life is written there !”
She pointed to the ocean ; fair,
Still, and calm was then the scene,
The breeze was hush'd, the night serene ;
O'er the blue waters, bright and clear,
No bark was wand'ring far or near ;
The sea birds, pillow'd in the caves,
Slept high above the gentle waves ;
The hush of rest upon the sea
Peacefully reign'd, yet solemnly,

Save where the breakers on the sand,
Roll'd in majestically grand,
Waking what seem'd in thought to be,
The vespers of the mighty sea.

“ Now mark ! the more remote, how there
A stiller aspect far doth wear
The sea ; nearer, you may perceive
A gentle, very gentle heave.
Yet the vast wave is still more clear,
And more transparent, the more near,
Till glitt'ring beautifully bright,
One stream of phosphorescent light,
It curling reaches now the shore,
The billow bursts, and is no more.
Thus Owain from my dream I've started—
What hope, what joy, when last we parted ;
The past, the future, oh, how bright,
A day of bliss, but what a night !
What shadows now are darkly stealing,
A few short hours, and ev'ry feeling
Chill'd in the icy bonds of care,
And almost verging in despair.

“ My sire has some dark end to serve,
And I have never known him swerve ;
Reproach, entreaties, vain are all ;
No power can soften or appal,
And all obstructions but impel
Him on, the obstacle to quell.

Such have I seen, and such I know
 Is his determination now ;
 Love could not move, much less command,
 To give that caitiff knight my hand.
 Nay, nay, it cannot be; such shame
 Shall never, never stain my name ;
 Death, yes, a thousand deaths, ere I
 Will wed that soul of infamy.
 I could not lose thee, Owain, no ;
 If tyrant death had laid thee low,
 Few would my days of grieving be,
 Transient the passing agony.
 A pang, a bitter pang, no more,
 The turmoil would be quickly o'er,
 And then I'd seek thee where the day
 Knows no declining. Then away
 Through scenes where fancy's loftiest power
 Must trembling own it cannot soar ;
 But there not sweeter bliss could be,
 Than living, ling'ring, still with thee,
 With arms enclasp'd, and hearts o'erflowing,
 And love, increasing love still knowing.
 Through fields of ether roaming still,
 Where'er should point our mutual will,
 With not a passing shade to come
 Across the radiance of that home.

" But, oh ! to live on earth and be
 For ever torn apart from thee,

And mine the deed—but such a fate,
I cannot, dare not, contemplate.
Thy loss must ring my hope's deep knell,
Thine absence prove my life's farewell.
There's hope for disappointed love,
For thwarted aspirations peace,
The future may less dreary prove,
Fate from its bonds may joy release:
The severed limb, the gory side,
The sick'ning flesh wound opening wide,
Or mangled, crushed, or gashed with steel,
These oft the leech's art may heal;
But the slight stab that inly bleeds,
The depth of human skill exceeds.
Then who can soothe the bosom's smart?
Oh, who can heal the broken heart?
And mine is breaking, bursting now,
What power shall shield me from the blow?"

"Thy shield is ready at thy side,
My best beloved, my destined bride;
Nor think that while with life I'm blest,
That form which I have oft caress'd,
Shall be another's, though he were
The royal prince of Cambria fair.
My fears, though dark, are lost in thine,
As twilight sinks in sombre night,
As riv'lets in the flashing brine,
Mingling are ever lost to sight.

But let me soothe thy panting breast,
And calm those madd'ning fears to rest ;
For if I dream'd there is an hour,
Which could e'er give thee to his power,
And realize that doom, I'd fling
My arms around thee, and we'd spring
From this tall tower, and taste beneath
The sweet forgetfulness of death :
Together should our hearts grow still,
Together should our frames grow chill ;
No power could then divide our trust,
Or separate our mingled dust."

He strain'd her to his beating heart,

He press'd his lips upon her brow :

"Why, Gertrude, should we ever part?

Fly, dearest, fly then with me now."

"'Tis madness, Owain—tempt me not !

I do not doubt thee—doubt thee ! No,
Thy vows would never be forgot,

For aught that lures the heart below.

Remember, Diserth's guards are keen,

Inevitably would be seen

Our flight, and thou must know

The weight of the succeeding blow :

Death, or perchance captivity,

For both, while life lasts, misery.

'Tis wiser far to leave me here,

Raise ev'ry follower far and near ;

Lead to these cheerless halls thy band,
Of my stern sire demand my hand.
He will refuse, be not denied;
By right, or might, obtain thy bride;
But spare his life, oh, harm him not,
And let it never be forgot,
Though fierce is his avenging ire,
De Lacy is thy Gertrude's sire."
She paused, a mournful smile o'erspread
Her face, but yet it sweetly shed
A radiance o'er her features fair,
Which like the rainbow in the air,
In bright relief against the cloud,
Seems with a brighter hue endow'd;
The darker, heavier is the sky,
When sunbeams shine despairingly.

As if she'd read his heart of hearts,
On his were fixed her swimming eyes,
That burning thrill which love imparts,
When answ'ring soul to soul replies
In wordless, soundless, ecstacies;
When mortal, mortal deifies,
But yet which reads with spirit's eye,
The truth no power can falsify,
Shot wildly, and read clearly there
In characters as crystal clear,
That love which knows beside on earth,
Naught of such pure, such priceless worth.

"There is a boon I'd ask of thee,
 And did I think unwillingly
 It would be given, I ne'er would crave
 That which full many a pang will save
 When thou art absent from my side :
 Perchance I may not be thy bride;
 The wish is selfish, yet it proves,
 How wildly, deeply, woman loves.
 Oh, wilt thou promise, that if we
 To-night part till eternity,
 And all our future hopes prove vain,
 Thou wilt not love on earth again?
 Within my grave I could not rest,
 Beneath the sod I could not sleep,
 If that another maiden's breast
 Thy widow'd love should fondly keep.
 The very thought is agony,
 That thy affection should grow chill,
 Another watch thy beaming eye,
 When mine is long since cold and still;
 Another's heart beat wild for thee,
 Another love thy manly form,
 When my poor frame at rest shall be,
 The fitting prey of slimy worm.
 I know not why, but on my heart
 There is a load I cannot bear—
 The tear relieving will not start;
 It is the apprehensive fear,
 Some blow decisive now is pending.
 Oh, may it swiftly be descending,

And spare us as it falls beneath,
Or grant us both a common death."

"Gertrude, it is again my task
To soothe thy fears—thou need'st not ask
Thy wish'd for boon, for never, never
Aught from thy love my soul can sever.
It wounds my spirit painfully,
That thou should'st deem that time may be
A balm for grief, a boundless sea,
Where I should drown thy memory :
And how much less on earth receive
Another's heart, for which to give
Again that passion of my soul,
Which gusheth now without control.
I know that flowers bud and bloom,
I know they find an early tomb,
I know their stems are clothed again

With leaves and petals bright and gay,
And last year's blossoms all remain,

Together where at eld they lay :
But scarce observed within the shade,
On hill sides, valleys, meadows spread,
With dark green leaves of glossy hue,
Bespangled with the morning dew,
There grows the fern, and mark beneath—
The blossom cherish'd until death ;
Their verdant life is unity,
And both together droop and die.

Say to the islands, leave the sea,
 Will they thy wild behest obey?
 Say to the billows curling free,
 Desert the sands on which you play;
 Say to the mountain leave thy base,
 Bid flowers the summer no more grace,
 Or willows cease to fringe the stream,
 Which glistens in the soft moonbeam;
 Or bid the zephyrs flee the west,
 Or teach the ocean ceaseless rest,
 But tell me not that time may prove
 That I can yet another love.

“ Gertrude, ’tis time that we should part,
 The moon has long since kiss’d the sea,
 But hope is whisp’ring to my heart,
 We yet shall know felicity.
 ’Tis said, and ’tis by some believed,
 One human soul does pass on earth
 Through many a change of death and birth,
 That we perchance through years have lived,
 Exalted, or debased, as we
 Have walk’d in sin or purity.
 I almost feel in some past sphere,
 Gertrude, thou hast to me been dear;
 Perchance as sea birds on the shore,
 We’ve loved each other long before;
 Perchance as roe-deer we have roved,
 And fondly, deeply, wildly loved;

Or as humanity have we
Tasted earth's purest ecstacy.
But let this be a foolish dream,
Of fancy a distorted gleam ;
The thought is sweet, through ages gone,
We have together lived as one ;
But sweeter far the thought to me,
Thus we shall live eternally.
Thou art the ether of my light,
My rays of love shine bright in thee ;
Dissolve the ether—ebon night,
Changeless reigns universally.
Stars in the firmament are set,
Like diamonds in a field of jet ;
And shade and gloom, with sad embrace,
Enclasp the wide-spread realms of space.
Then, Gertrude, should'st thou pass away,
Know that my love's soul warming ray,
In the dark night of grief would set,
For thee I never can forget.
Dread not the future, though its gloom
May seem to seal our mis'ry's doom ;
Be this thy solace, it is mine—
In life, and death, I will be thine.

“ 'Mid Snowdon's highest peaks, yet there,
Where dazzling flowers fail to bloom,
Some moss or lichens will appear,
And gently creep o'er verdure's tomb.

But where has seeth'd an Etna's flood,
 And howl'd the Salamander's brood,
 There darkly desolation reigns,

Amid the lifeless heaps of dust,
 And vegetation's link disdains

To beautify the half cool'd crust.
 The silver moonbeams linger not,
 They fail to glisten on the spot,
 And sunbeams only serve to show
 The scene in all its dreary woe.
 Then, Gertrude, losing all in thee,
 Who stirr'st this lava flood in me,
 Like the extinct volcano, I
 As dark and desolate will die.

"I need not cheer thee to the task,
 I know thou wilt be all I ask;
 But e'en if force is used to try,
 Let it not shake thy constancy.
 If they should drag thee to the altar,
 Let not thy maiden bosom falter;
 Before the nuptial vows are spoken,
 The which would leave thy pledges broken,
 If I come not, then thou wilt know
 Some sudden death has laid me low."
 He drew a dagger from its sheath:

"Loved one, receive this gift from me;
 Thou wilt not quail to look on death,
 When death shall join our spirits free."

Short was the parting, keen the pang,
Upon the casement low he sprang,
And safely reach'd the vale. His steed
An anxious welcome fondly neigh'd.
“Poor Winter! now thy vaunted speed
Must save me in this hour of need.”
He mounts his courser, o'er the plain,
With bounding feet and flying mane,
As if his master's haste he knew,
The noble horse like falcon flew.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

The white mists from the rippling Clwyd
Were gently rising from its flood,
When up its valley Diserth's lord,
With half a score of horsemen, rode.
Upon his wrist De Lacy bore
A falcon of the purest breed,
Nursed where the dashing billow's roar
Mingles with old St. Tudno's creed.
His ancient falconer on his right,
Bore other hawks with hoods bedight,
While silver bells with jesses bound,
Rang forth their sweet and liquid sound.
De Lacy seem'd on sport intent,
Yet gloomily his brow was bent,
Nor mark'd the sunbeams tint the heath,
Nor watch'd the vapours from beneath.
Rise like a curtain, and displaying
Rocks, woods, and trees, where night delaying,
Spread with affrighted wings her flight,
So swiftly burst the clear daylight;
And when a heron sprang on wing,
He scarcely saw his falconer fling

His bird unhooded at the prey,
Which starting, cleft its ærial way
With haste unwonted, but the strife
It knew was one for death or life.
De Lacy gazed with vacant eye,
Though loved he well his hawks to fly ;
And when the loud cheers of his men
Rang clearly through the wooded glen,
He saw, yet scarcely knew the prey
Upon the green turf lifeless lay.

“ ’Tis strange,” he muttered, “ strange that now
These childish fears should cloud my brow—
Now, when almost within my grasp,
The objects of my life I clasp ;
Yet phantom-like as I pursue,
They vanish, and are lost to view ;
And Gertrude, whom I’d thought to find
Meek as an angel, will not bind
Herself to gratify my pride :
But I will never be denied,
She shall be dark Fitzhurse’s bride.
And yet that vision of the night :

I tremble still as all the past
In fancy shot before my sight,
With light’ning glare, as it would blast
My intellect—I shudder yet,
O, what shall teach me to forget?
And let these recollections rot,
And be as though they had been not?

I feel like one who, on the brink
Of the dark cliff, doth pause to think,
When he should boldly onward press,
And danger in forgetfulness
Should steep—to pause and look,
The brain fast reeling will not brook,
The glance beneath each sense appals,
The trembling coward headlong falls,
And perishes, where energy
Would crown his task with victory.
Shall I then fall a victim? No—
One life to sacrifice, one blow,
And I am free to win what I
Have sought for long, despairingly.”

He spurr'd his horse, and up the vale
Swept faster than the summer gale,
Until he reach'd a large gray stone,
With two beneath it, as if thrown
From the hill side above by chance,
On these he fixed his piercing glance.
“This is the spot,” he murmur'd low,
“I'll seek the witch, let weal or woe
Betide.” From his bold steed he sprung,
The reins unto a trooper flung,
And then aloud, “Stephen,” he cried,
“Let the dark wood your forces hide,
I may not come till eventide:
But when my bugle blast ye hear,
If twice repeated, couch each spear,

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For then some danger lurketh near,
But stir not, until thrice, and clear,
The note bursts on your list'ning ear."

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With faulchion loosen'd in its sheath,
He strode along the flow'ry heath;
He reach'd a stream, and this pursued,
Which led him through a dense fir wood,
Until a deer path caught his gaze,
And this through all its tort'ous ways
For many a mile he followed then,
Till high above a narrow glen,
Mid way up Moel Famma's side,
All farther trace his search defied.
Fatigued and baffled in his chase,
The sweat in streams roll'd from his face;
With mutter'd curses, on the heath
He flung himself to gain his breath.
As he reclined, a mournful howl,
Such as might rise from prison'd ghoul,
Burst on his ear. Although 'twas day,
The Norman trembled as he lay:
He was no coward in the fray,
Nor dreaded aught of mortal form,
But things supernal, spell, or charm,
He fear'd far more than foe surrounding,
Or glitt'ring steel his progress bounding.

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He raised himself and gazed beneath,
And trembling held his panting breath;

Upon a ledge of rock, sat there
With glist'ning eyes and bristling hair,
A lonely wolf, which seem'd to know
The cliffs above conceal'd a foe.
His dismal howl he rais'd again,
Which echo'd through the silent glen,
The faithful warder of the cave,
Which frown'd above the torrent's wave.
Beneath the cavern's arch bright blazed
A fire—on which a cauldron placed,
Thick clouds of vap'rous smoke emitting,
While round it paced, with words befitting,
A woman's form, in robes array'd,
Dark as the dreariest midnight's shade ;
She mark'd the wolf's continued note,
Which lurking danger did denote ;
As if forewarn'd, she gently said,
“ Hush, Zadok !” and the wolf obeyed.
Together with his mistress weird,
Within the cave they disappear'd.

With cautious step De Lacy now
Descended from the dark cliff's brow ;
He cross'd the stream, the broad ledge gain'd,
But at the cavern's mouth remain'd,
Until he heard the stern request,
“ Enter, thou self-invited guest.”
The cavern's gloom was dark as night,
On he proceeded till the light

Behind him did in distance seem
Like a pale lamp's expiring beam :
Sudden he started with surprise,
It was the tame wolf's glist'ning eyes,
Which in the dark like fire shone,
Or gems which sunbeams glisten on.
He paused, and almost quaked with fear,
When clearly fell upon his ear,
"What seeks the steel-clad warrior here?"
"I seek to know if thou canst give
That which will cause to cease to live?"
"Proceed yet farther." He obeyed—
Still more intense became the shade,
When suddenly a flood of light
Shot through the cavern red and bright,
Revealing as he wond'ring gazed,
A vaulted dome, where sparkling blazed,
What seem'd to him a myriad gems,
As if earth's loveliest diadems
Were all despoil'd to grace the hall,
Their brilliants decking roof and wall :
A spacious well beside him lay,
Its gushing waters wound their way
Through crevices unseen to day,
But all surrounding shone so bright,
Its limpid flood seem'd dark as night,
As though fresh risen from the tomb,
Where earth, in never-changing gloom,
Holds buried in its hidden breast
The prison where the waters rest,
By roots of continents compress'd.

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Removed the distance of the cave,
A sable altar was uprear'd,
Its steps rough stones of granite pave,
Beside it sat the mystic weird;
A silver lamp, with lambent flame,
Shed on her sombre form its beam,
But all her features were conceal'd
'Neath a thick veil which nought reveal'd.
She turn'd and faced her mail-clad guest,
Then said, "Repeat thy dark request:"
Who thus replied, "It is not wrath
Or vengeance, but across my path
An obstacle now lies—some charm
I seek to still th' impeding form."
"Where, warrior, is thy dagger then?
Cowards are they who seek my glen!"
He bit his lip—his ire subdued,
But frantic was the spirit mewed
Within his breast—it boiled within,
As roars the ocean's madd'ning din,
When closely press'd by rocks around
It rushes through a narrow bound:
"The lion scorns a feeble prey—
The thing which lies across my way
A winter's blast would almost sweep
Its spirit into endless sleep.
Not this alone—I seek to know,
If it be in thy power to show
What stored within the future lies,
Now hidden from my longing eyes."

“It may be granted—but ere thou
Thy future destiny shalt know,
The past before me must appear.
Dost thou refrain thy deeds to hear
Proclaimed aloud, or dark, or clear,
As they the garb of truth shall wear?”
Silent, De Lacy paused at first,
Then answered, “Witch, I dare the worst.”

Upon the altar lay a scroll
Of parchment wound, a massive roll;
This she unfolded, which displayed
A mass of mystic signs, arrayed
In varied hues of black and red.
She pricked her arm—a drop it bled,
With this she wrote some words, and then
She closely roll’d the scroll again.
“Draw hither”—and the Knight drew near;
“Thou see’st this stone—now bright and clear
Is there depicted to my sight
That which lies hid in mem’ry’s night.”
Before him lay, in dark oak set,
A smoothly polish’d mass of jet;
He gaz’d both long and earnestly,
Then murmur’d faintly, “Nought I see.”
“If to thy ken it is denied,
I will expound,” the Sorc’ress cried.

“I see upon the flow’ry heath
Two manly forms with but one breath,

One heart, one mind, so strong the tie
Which binds their souls in unity:
But one is too confiding, he
Dreams not his friend could treach'rous be,
Till whispers reach at length his ear,
That she, who is than life more dear,
Is faithless to his trusting heart;
And he who hurl'd the madd'ning dart
Is that fond friend, deem'd falsely true:
Now is outspread before my view
A tower, wherein a lonely room,
There two are lingering in the gloom;
The false ones they—a third appears,
His vengeful hand a dagger rears—
A closing strife—the traitor flies—
The woman writhes in agonies.
The wrong'd one, tortured with despair,
Flies wildly from the fallen fair
Whom he deems slain—though wounded sore,
Doth yet survive to suffer more;
While as an outlaw lives her lord,
From social intercourse debarred.
Now starts to view, a vaulted aisle,
Up which, with many a gleesome smile,
Proceeds a gallant nuptial train,
While faithful followers throng the fane.
The bridegroom's face is turn'd from me—
I see it now—yes, it is he—
The trait'rous friend, the coward foe,
Doth pledge the sacred nuptial vow.”

The Sorc'ress paused: resumed again,
With more of sternness in her strain:
"Years pass away—time on the wing,
His ceaseless changes still doth bring:
The traitor, wearied of his wife,
Now foully seeks her spotless life!"
The Unknown tore aside her veil,
Exclaiming "Wretch, I know thee well!
Yes, Hugh de Lacy, tremble now,
Hide thy debased and blackened brow:
Thy victim once—yes, Nesta lives!
An injured woman ne'er forgives."

'Twas Tewdwr's wife; but rolling years
Had not pass'd her unnoticed by;
Changed, though still beautiful, appears
Her chisell'd features symmetry:
The flush was gone—as white as snow
Or marble, her complexion now;
A breathing statue, save the eye,
Which burnt with anger'd majesty;
Her hair beside her pallid cheek,
Contrasting with her iv'ry neck,
Fell in dishevell'd streams of jet
From 'neath a silver coronet.
The glitt'ring cave—the mystic scene—
Her sable robes—her fiery mien—
Her round white arm extended bare,
All served to give her form an air

Than mortal more, than angel less—
Something 'twixt sin and holiness.

“Behold thy victim!” now she cried;
“The wreck of sin and faith belied;
When found by thee, as pure as day,
Chaste as the pale moon’s gentle ray:
No thought did from my bosom gush,
At which a cherubim could blush:
Unsullied as the winter’s snow,
No brighter flower on earth did grow,
By love surrounded, and how cherished!
Thou cam’st! all joy and all peace perish’d;
As a dark basilisk, thy gaze
Was fascinating; like the rays
Of earth’s fair satellite, though bright,
There was a poison in their light
Which charmed, e’en as it slew the life,
The pure existence of the wife.
Like those narcotic drugs, which steal
Upon the senses, ere we feel
Their fatal influence on the heart,
Which magically does impart
Together soothing peace and death,
Lulls the fond mind, and chokes the breath—
So stole thy words upon my ear.
I listen’d, though I felt to hear
Was but to err—thy sophistry
I drank, oh, how unthinkingly!

Nor even dream'd the human heart
Could play such an insidious part.

“Thy toils were spread—thy hapless prey
Unconscious in thy meshes lay,
But pity moved thee not, although
Thou knewest the impending blow
Would prove the ruin of my peace,
The end of earthly happiness.

Thy plans were laid with fiendish skill,
To bend and warp me to thy will;
The whirlpool's edge was unperceived,

I slept upon its waves secure,
For long my spirit nought received,

Save that which is as virtue pure :
But day by day, with toil increasing,
No hour from thy vile task releasing,
The current swifter, swifter flowing,
Thy power daily greater growing,
Till the dark vortex swept me in,
Confounded in my passion's din.
But such thy might, thou still didst smooth
The waves of thought and gently soothe
The budding pangs of heav'n's curse,
The bitter gnawings of remorse ;
Till on that eve of vengeance, then

I woke from that dark dream of woe,
And knew the depth of horror, when


I saved thee from th' avenger's blow ;

That thou for whom I'd flung aside
All peace, all virtue, station, pride,
And trampled on all laws divine,
To be — oh, Powers Eternal! — thine—
Thine, who, upon the tower's floor,
Saw from my breast the red stream pour,
Yet left me, as thy foul heart thought,
A gory corse—a thing of nought.

“I cannot paint that frenzied hour—
That weight of horror, that despair—
When death around did darkly lour,
Yet scorn'd to claim me as his share :
When light burst on my madd'ning brain,
And truth, in colours cold and plain,
Pictured the thing of sin that I
Had now become—my villany
Unmasking—and my treachery
To him, who then appear'd to be,
Contrasted with my guilt-stain'd lot,
A radiant sun without a spot.
I prayed—yes, in that hour I prayed—
That with the dead I might be laid,
That from the living should be swept
The memory where my ashes slept.
My eyes grew dim, my brain swam round,
My ears could catch no passing sound,
My pulse grew fainter, and at last
I thought my life was ebbing fast,

And fondly, even gratefully,
I closed my eyes—but not to die;
A passing lethargy was all
Which did my sense of life enthrall. . . .
I woke—a thing without a name—
A living monument of shame.

“I woke repentant, and to hate
The author of my guilty fate.
Know, Hugh De Lacy, that the time
Is coming when thy deeds of crime,
In flaming letters, shall uprear
Themselves, and they shall scorching sear
The vision of thy mind, and thou,
While yet upon the earth, shalt know
Some of the tortures of the lost,
And learn of mortal sin the cost.
Hugh, Lord of Diserth, search thy breast,
And tell me, doth within it rest
One ray of joy or pleasure, now
That thou hast stamp’d with shame my brow?
Does not the coward linger still?
And I, the victim of thy will,
Seem like a prophet from the tomb
Unto the hall of judgment come,
Loud to proclaim thy righteous doom?



“Say, monster, wouldst thou have me now
To aid thee snap thy nuptial vow?

To serve thy purposes again,
By adding to thy life a stain—
Not that it could become more foul,
Or deeper dye thy forfeit soul;
But, lest thou deemest I am one
Who live on earth for ill alone,
Know that the cauldron at the cave,
Which seethes above the rolling wave,
Contains that which ne'er fails to heal
All save the fatal wounds of steel.
The thought swept o'er me, but it pass'd,
This day should be on earth thy last;
But keener vengeance will be mine
The longer is thy life's decline."

She paused—then rais'd the mystic scroll,
And in the deep well cast the roll;
Her curse on Hugh De Lacy poured,
Who quivered at each awful word . . .
'Twas said—and then he, starting, cried,
"Witch! thy black doom shall be belied!"
But ere he drew his falchion bright
The cavern was as dark as night:
A laugh of scorn his wrath defies,
And mocks his cry of wild surprise.

The spacious cave he groped around,
At length the narrow passage found;
With cautious step yet eager haste,
The sinuous road De Lacy traced,

And when he reach'd the open air,
Not long he paus'd to linger there;
The summit of the cliff he gain'd,
Then through the wood, o'er hill he strain'd.
Three times his bugle horn he blew,
His troopers to the rescue flew,
But marvell'd when they saw no foe
On whom to strike a valiant blow.
He flung himself upon his horse,
To Diserth turn'd his flying course,
The wond'ring warders on the wall
Raise the portcullis, and let fall
The drawbridge o'er the yawning fosse,
Which, with wild haste, the troopers cross,
Though none can tell what is their need
To reach the castle with such speed.

To the red tower De Lacy hied—
For wine, and wine alone, he cried;
His draughts, though deep, could not assuage,
Or quell his thoughts' tumultuous rage;
And thus he sat till day was done,

The torches in the links were placed,
When, hark! without is clearly blown

A bugle-blast: "It is my guest,"
Unto himself he said; "as yet
My sun of fortune is not set . . .
Yes, it is he—" as on the stair
A sounding step the echoes bear,

Advancing near a moment more,
And boldly enters then the door
A warrior clad in mail; his coat
Was blazoned with a skipping goat;
Armed with a mace and dagger broad,
Proudly across the room he strode,
His proffered hand De Lacy clasp'd,
But as if some huge giant grasp'd,
The stranger press'd his fingers till
The blood the starting art'ries fill
Almost to bursting with the strain,
That Hugh De Lacy groaned with pain.
"Welcome!" he cried, "De Walter, here!
Thrice welcome to my simple cheer;
I need not ask if time has spared
Thy manhood's vigour unimpair'd—
Thy too warm greeting doth declare
Thy giant powers unshaken are!"
"Thanks, thanks, De Lacy! but since morn
My charger has his master borne,
And both have fasted, and thy cheer
Doth not ungrateful now appear;
Thy menials have well spread the board,
And Diserth's towers seem bravely stored."
At once he turn'd him to the meal,
His knife, his dagger's polish'd steel—
He fill'd his trencher from the chine,
And deeply quaff'd the ruddy wine
In draughts unstinted, and renew'd,
He drank the red grape's juicy flood.

De Lacy keenly eyed his guest,
As if he'd read his inmost breast,
Not that he cared himself to share
The secrets which were hidden there,
Though many a deed of villany,
And many a bloody tragedy
Would be reveal'd, if all was known
Which that dark bosom call'd its own :
It was the glance with which we gaze
On horse or hound we would appraise,
If they true slaves would prove to be
In the swift chase or the melée.
De Lacy needs a callous heart,
One who at no wild deed would start,
A willing tool who valued life
As nothing in the bloody strife,
Whose valour has a price, yet must
Be one whom he might safely trust.

His scrutiny was long: at last,
As if his doubts away were cast,
His face resum'd its wonted air
Of hardened sin, yet tinged with care ;
Then unconcerned, to his strange guest,
His would-be thoughtless speech addressed.
“What is the news from Henry's Court?
Hast any tidings of import?
Art lately from the plains afar,
Or bleedest thou in civil war?

Thy life I almost envy thee—
So jovial, varied, and so free—
Where wild excitement never palls,
Or drowsy thought the mind enthralls.
Here, we in narrow walls are mewed,
And when we taste a foeman's blood,
'Tis in some petty border feud,
Where plunder is the noblest aim
Which doth the val'rous breast inflame,
While fame and honour never deign
Amid such paltry scenes to reign.

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“ Why banter thus ?” De Walter cried ;
“ For well thou know'st how far, how wide,
Both fame and honour are removed
From those wild scenes where I have roved.
Who bids the heaviest purse of gold,
To him my faulchion bright is sold ;
And though 'tis true I've fought and won
Where noble valiant deeds were done,
Yet booty was the prize I sought :
Thus have I ever bled and fought.
Nor doubt I that De Lacy too,
Would shun to join our valiant crew ;
Thou would'st not need, by friar, or priest,
All our adventures should be blest,
Nor would'st thou turn with slacken'd rein,
If we perchance in sacred fane
Should deem a booty lay worth winning,
Though at the high expense of sinning :

Thy nature is not too refined,
 Thy manly heart is not too kind
 To be a Free Lance ; with the sword
 For sceptre, and its arm for lord.

“ But thou at home art better paid,
 And now and then a Cambrian raid
 Serves to keep bright your spears and swords,
 And health and exercise affords.
 Not that I would exchange thy ease,
 My merry life of roving cease
 To be the Warden of all Wales,
 And hold subdued her hills and vales.
 To rise at morn, and know not where
 At eve shall be prepared our lair ;
 By laws unfettered, and the will
 The only bond our hearts fulfil :
 No ties of country, home, or love,
 But free as blows the air above,
 To north, or south, wherever lies
 The richest, most attractive prize ;
 And where we fall we find a grave,
 No elegy—save, ‘ He was brave.’
 And when the past I sometimes trace,
 In memory review my race,
 If I could live my life once more,
 The same wild course I’d hurry o’er ;
 In all things, save in one, that deed
 E’en makes *my* hardened bosom bleed.

"It was in sunny Italy,
 Hush'd was the convent's vesper peal,
 When the fair brides of chastity
 Were startled with the clang of steel
 Clad warriors in the holy aisle,
 Whose steps the pavement did defile.
 I never shall forget that cry,
 That piteous shriek of agony,
 When round each daughter's fairy waist,
 A ruffian trooper's arm was cast.
 And there was one as angel fair,
 Whom I had destined for my share;
 But ere I seized my lovely prey,
 An aged confessor barr'd the way—
 'Avaunt!' I cried, but moved he not,
 I laid him lifeless on the spot,
 And seized the nun—my vig'rous arm
 Scarcely perceived her fragile form :
 I hurried through the corridor,
 When as I reach'd the broken door,
 'A rescue!' was the startling cry,
 Our men were forced to fight or fly;
 But ere they mingled in the fray,
 Each one had lost his lovely prey.
 I reach'd my horse, the saddle gain'd,
 The young girl to my bosom strain'd,
 Then boldly charged, pass'd through the fight,
 And held at furious speed my flight.
 Though all unharmed, not unpursued:
 Two knights who thirsted for my blood,

Came spurring in the exciting race,
But swifter still I led the chase.

“ The fair maid like a broken flower,
Lay lifeless in my firm embrace,
My coarse rough speech has not the pow’r
To paint her loveliness of face.
A corpse just as the soul has fled,
Not living, and yet hardly dead,
With life upon its lips delaying,
Like zephyrs amid rose leaves playing;
And those who watch the heaving breast,
Know not if it be quite at rest.
Like the high tide upon the shore,
Ere yet its salt flood doth return,
You wonder if it will flow more,
And when it ceases, first you learn,
By the dark line upon the sand,
Which tells the waters leave the land;
Not at the moment, but when past,
We know the loved have breathed their last.
On came her champions, and they gain’d
Upon me, though my steed was strain’d
Unto his topmost speed, still on
But two score yards, their task were won.
Rage, disappointment, fired my heart,
What! (passion tempted) lose thy prey?
De Lacy, even thou dost start,
My murd’rous hand I could not stay—

'Twas quickly done, my glitt'ring knife
Pierced at a blow the maiden's life.
I hurl'd her from me on the plain,
The warriors drew their slacken'd rein,
Their knightly aid was all in vain,
'The nun was numbered with the slain.'"
He paused—then with an effort said,
"Why doth De Lacy need my aid?"

"De Walter, I have known thee well,
For one who feared not heaven or hell;
Nor deem'd I that within thy heart
There was that white, that woman's part,
Which waken'd in the breast regret,
When mem'ry should alone forget."
"Nay, taunt me not," his guest replied,
"Those thoughts e'en thou shalt not deride;
My heart and arm are firm as ever,
Or breast to pierce, or head to sever."
"Spoken like him whom once I knew,
The boldest of a dauntless crew;
Now list while I my plans unfold,
Then give thy counsel as of old.—
Thou knowest Hugh Fitzhurse of the hill,
His wealth is great, his lands are broad:
Learn then, 'tis my determined will
To wed his rich and lovely ward.
But Fitzhurse firmly doth deny
My press'd entreaty, unless he

Shall in return from me receive,
A boon I doubted long to give;
My only child to be his bride,
And he this gift is not denied.
His eld of days is waxing wan,
And then my daughter's guardian,
Together with my Ladye's dower,
Will give to me unrivall'd power.
But there is one who bars my way,
One form across my path doth lay,
For whom I cannot seize the prize—
De Walter, what wouldst thou advise?"

"Remove it," was the short reply,
Suggested by iniquity.
"Such counsel deem'd I would be thine,
I need not say it has been mine;
Yet I have paused to strike the blow,
To rid me of my secret foe,
Partly because, in days gone by,
We lived in peaceful amity;
And those old recollections still,
Softened somehow my stubborn will—
But more, because I've needed one,
By whom the deed could well be done."
"I thought so, Hugh—my heart divined,
Mine was the arm you hoped to find;
This preface long it did not need,
To spur me to a prompted deed—

The argument I feel the most,
 Is that which regulates the cost."
 "All, except this, may have been spared,
 Here lies the gold—art thou prepared?
 Well said, De Walter! here it lies,
 To glut the greediest avarice."
 The glitt'ring heap he wide displays,
 A hundred nobles in the rays
 Of the bright torches glitter there,
 The bold assassin's ample share,
 Who smiled, as he his belt unbraced,
 And in his pouch the pieces placed.
 "Thanks, Lord of Diserth; let me know
 Where I may meet thy hated foe."
 "Led here by fate, within my power,
 The victim lies beneath this tower!
 Rise, follow me, use not the sword,
 I would prefer the silent cord."

He seized a torch—in the thick wall
 A secret door revealed a stair,
 On which descending clanks their mail,
 And glitters in the ruddy flare:
 Still down for many a fathom deep,
 Where the foundations of the keep,
 In the dark rock seem almost one,
 As if hewn from the solid stone,
 Till paused they at a grated door,
 Hung firmly on the basement floor,

When on their ears a faint voice fell,
Clear as the last notes of a bell :

“ Oh, it is morning now !” it cries,
“ How welcome to my longing eyes ;
And with it comes Apollo, too,”
As, in the doorway, greets her view
De Lacy with his torch. “ But who
Is he who stalks behind ? ’Tis night !
But wherefore with the clear daylight ?
It must be so, yet it is strange
I never mark’d before this change.”
Thus a frail figure sung or said,
Who on the dungeon’s floor was laid ;
But now her wasted form she raised,
And wildly at th’ intruders gazed,
In sitting posture : for her strength
Could not suffice her prison’s length
To pace, or e’en to stand—she lay
Or sat by turns through night and day.
She had been beautiful, but now
In elf locks did her tresses flow ;
Her cheeks were sunken, but her eye
Beam’d with the maniac’s brilliancy :
A mournful wreck of loveliness,
Where still you may full clearly trace
The charms which once adorn’d the face,
In the soft features’ chisell’d grace :
Her lips were shrunk, and the teeth,
Though white, were too much seen beneath,

Which gave a strange unearthly air,
Such as a waking corpse might wear.

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Whoe'er has roam'd by night alone,
Where the mould'ring dead around him lay ;
O'er the echoing vaults, where the great or gay
Sleep in their narrow cells of stone ;
'Mid altar tombs where effigies
Belie the forms which rest beneath,
Save as they are allegories,
Cold, stiff, and pitiless as death ?
And the moonbeam is the only light
Which streams through vaulted aisle and nave,
Bidding the solemn shade take flight,
As, silv'ring o'er each crumbling grave,
Its silent voice seems gently saying,
" Think not, oh, dust ! time is delaying :
My trembling beams are typical,
Now stealing on the midnight hour,
Of that which in its radiance full,
Shall with revivifying power,
Burst on your darksome years of rest ;—
The heavenly light which wakes the bless'd."

To wander thus when the echoing tread
Seems to disturb the slumb'ring dead,
When the sighing winds no whispers bear,
And silence reigns on the earth, in the air ;
And to mark how the waves of old time roll,
Is to feel a thrill through heart and soul,

Which a feeling of awe it ne'er fails to convey,
 When naught but the signs of change and
 decay,
 Of things that are pass'd and are passing away,
 Are mingled there in confused array,
 Which the ruin'd roofs and the tombs display,
 By the side of the walls all broken and gray :
 And the moss and the fern which grow
 between,
 And the ivy hanging in garlands green,
 And the tall rank grass which the building
 paves, .
 And almost concealing the lowly graves—
 These speak to the heart in a solemn tone,
 The voice is the voice of such scenes alone :
 The builders have pass'd, and their names have
 flown,
 Or at best, by the learned few are known ;
 While those who are laid in the halls they
 raised,
 Their children know not where their forms are
 placed ;
 'Tis here, or 'tis there, the wand'rer is told,
 But the next who the tale of the past shall unfold,
 Will point to another more distant spot,
 And that as the home of the dead allot.
 The voice is the voice of the past which cries,
 Wealth, station, and honour, are vanities ;
 And the lesson is good, if we learn it well,
 To bid to the world and its hopes farewell.

The ruin and wreck of things once fair,
 No cheerful thought to the heart can bear;
 But the dreariest wreck we gaze upon,
 Is the mind when its task on earth is done,
 Ere the beaut'ous shrine of moulded clay,
 Is even tainted with decay.

'Tis the casket with the jewel stolen,
 The temple with its altars fallen;
 'Tis the statue, but without the soul,
 The sea-beach, where no waters roll;
 The darkened eye, the lambent fire,
 The leafless wood, the stringless lyre,
 Or mould'ring earth without a sky,
 Or space, with no Divinity.
 And such was she, whose feeble frame
 Was but humanity in name;
 Who now with fev'rish look, and eye
 Which gleam'd forth so beseechingly
 A mute refrain to accents mild,
 Imploring to regain her child.

“ Oh, will you bring her back to me,
 And let me shield her in my arms,
 And I will nurse her tenderly,
 And fondly watch her budding charms.
 'Twas cruel to divide our hearts,
 No mother from her offspring parts;
 And mine was taken from my breast
 When needing most a mother's care,

And my spirit long has been in quest
Of my lovely child, so young and fair.
I've sought her when the earth was sleeping,
When the bright stars of heaven seem'd
 weeping
In pity for my mournful fate,
So feeble, and so desolate ;
In other worlds I've sought her there,
While angels took me 'neath their care,
And bore me on their wings away,
To the gay scenes of endless day.
Oft as I ask'd, the same reply,
' They had not seen her'—but each eye
Of the bright Seraphs had a tear—
They mourn'd with me, but could not cheer.
Then turn'd I to my task again,
And sought the realms of the salt sea.
' It had not seen her !' said the main,
While the billows moan'd in sympathy.
Then I ask'd the winds as they swept along,
If she had roved their realms among ?
The storm was hush'd, the zephyr sighed,
A whispered ' No !' their voice replied.
I clasp'd my hand upon my heart,
 'Twas chill and cold as winter's snow ;
The briny tear-drops which did start,
 No more a scalding flood did flow :
All frozen was my bosom's grief,
Where'er I sought was no relief ;
Yet turn'd I to the earth again,
But not amid the sons of men.

I sought if the wild birds could tell,
If they my lovely child had seen ;
I sought each nook, each hidden dell,
Where the woods wore their brightest green.
The birds were kind they sadly said—
They ne'er had seen my gentle maid.
I spoke to the flow'rs fair and gay,
They closed their petals, answ'ring 'Nay!
While dew-drops fell from each sweet leaf—
They wept, but could not cheer my grief.
Wearied and worn, in my wild chase,
I did my ling'ring steps retrace,
Seeking once more my form of clay,
Which in its noisome prison lay ;
There the toad was sitting at its head,
And the viper crawl'd about its feet :
They were death's youthful brides, they said,
I cared not for their foolish cheat.
Nor would I ask them for my child,
Her spotless name would be defiled
If breath'd with theirs. But woe is me !
Where can my heart's loved idol be ?”

“Who, who is this?” De Walter cried,
Now turning on his darksome guide.
De Lacy answered—“Once my bride !”
“Thy bride ! O, God of heaven ! thy wife !
And thou dost seek her spotless life ?
Fiend, villain, monster, art thou man ?
A deed so vile, so black, to plan,

And make me agent of thy will,
A woman, and a maniac to kill !
No, no—though deeply dyed with sin,
Yet the still voice which speaks within,
Is not so stifled but it cries,
' Complete not thy enormities.'
Though oft my sword has had its price,
To crown some wild career of vice,
But never in a deed so dark,
Oh ! never in such hellish work
Has it, or will it e'er be sold—
Here, Hugh de Lacy, take thy gold !"
He flung the pieces on the floor,
And quickly pass'd the dungeon door.

" My curse upon the coward !" cried
De Lacy—" once more are denied
My hopes. Must I then do the deed,
And bid this helpless maniac bleed ?
Almost an act of kindness, though
I hesitate to strike the blow."
Just then upon his ear her cry
Burst as before so piteously,
" Oh, give my infant back to me,
And I will nurse her tenderly !"
De Lacy's swarthy face turned pale,
He trembled at her lonely wail,
Exclaim'd—" I cannot take her life !
Avaunt, ye fiends—she is my wife."

He left the maniac in the gloom,
And sought in haste the upper room.

“ Defeated, once more foil’d, when I
Was fondly sure of victory—
And dark De Walter now will be
Arbiter of my destiny.
Shall this assassin hold the cord
That binds the fate of Diserth’s lord?
A grain my foolishness has sowed,
To fear and tremble at his nod;
At best, most dear will be the price
To satisfy his avarice.
What, then, is gold the only road
T’ escape from this detested clod?
’Tis easier far to trust the sea,
And float into security—
Though it be an ensanguin’d flood,
I’ll triumph in De Walter’s blood.”

Some hours had pass’d—the Free Lance slept
Unconsciously—when lightly stepp’d
A gloomy form, with naked blade.
Often, and oft his steps he staid,
To listen if his victim heard,
But not a limb De Walter stirr’d—
Nor ever shall on earth again,
He sleeps his last sleep, with the slain.
His murdered form De Lacy raised,
A moment on his features gazed,

Assured himself the fatal blow
Had silenced his detested foe.
His arms defaced, his broad shield bent,
Then bore him to the battlement ;
Exerting all his giant force,
O'er the dark edge he hurl'd the corse,
Together with its arms to show,
As if in fight he'd fallen low.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

THE morn that Hugh De Lacy rode
With fev'rish haste beside the Clwyd,
On Aber's stream the sunbeams glow'd,
And dyed in gold its rushing flood,
Which shot beside the palace halls,
Laving almost its noble walls.
Though now no stone remains to tell
Where rose the castle in the dell,
Naught save a verdant mound of sod
Declares where royal princes trod ;
And as it sleeps beside the wave,
It seems a sunken giant grave,
A mournful relic of the past,
Ere Cambria's patriot sons were dead,
And foreign tyranny had cast
Its chains o'er those who fought and bled,
When in a moan of agony
Freedom outbreath'd her parting sigh.

Within a humble room alone
He sits, whom Cymri Monarch own,
The last of that most ancient race
Whom Cambria's throne did fitly grace.

We cannot gaze upon a tree,
The last of thousands once surrounding,
Where greenwood glades were wont to be,
With hunter's cheerful notes resounding;
But its lone lot will aye impart
A mournful feeling to the heart.
We cannot see a ruin'd pile,
Where but one arch sustains the aisle,
With fluted columns only one,
Its chisell'd brethren all o'erthrown,
But that the breast will heave a sigh
Of fond and sadd'ning sympathy.
The last leaf on the noble tree,
The last, perchance the fairest flower,
Because though last, most loved will be,
And sadly mourn'd its final hour :
Though those which fell in heaps before,
Unnoticed as they with'ring lay,
Were quite as lovely—though no store
Was set upon their blossoms gay.
How oft it is with life, with health,
With friends, with pleasure, and with wealth,
Until we lose them, not till then,
We know their priceless benizen ;
Things past, or passing, love we most,
Just as we feel their princely cost.
“The last!” it is a mournful word—
What heart so dead has ne'er been stirr'd,
When chiming on his ear has come
The knell—which surely speaks the doom,

E'en if delayed, of all on earth,
 That has, and ever will have birth.
 "The first," speaks smiling hope to men;
 "The last," will be the earth's amen.

Last of his race not then was he,
 "Llewelyn" did not stand alone,
 Fate beam'd on him most smilingly,
 And more secure appeared his throne.
 A baffled foe, increasing friends,
 Victorious arms—and all that lends
 Unto a king that regal air,
 Was his in an unstinted share.
 Not that his heart from care was free,
 Not lull'd in false security;
 He wore that self reliant look,
 Which will not tamely insult brook,
 And plainly speaks, "I can defend,
 If there be foes who dare contend."

Thrice he together clapp'd his hands,
 A page attends his lord's commands.
 "Seek the strange knight! bid him appear,
 "Say that alone we wait him here."
 Quickly the summons was obeyed,
 From head to foot in mail arrayed,
 Dark Tewdwr's noble form appear'd;
 As he his sov'reign chieftain neared,
 Lowly he knelt upon the ground,
 With loyal reverence profound.

“Receive, my Prince,” he firmly said,
“The homage for the first time paid,
Since Davydd sat upon the throne,
Which justly has become your own.”
“Art thou then, Tewdwr Wylt,” he cried,
“By whom the Marchers are defied?
Who tam’d the trait’rous border side,
And quell’d the trait’rous Griffith’s pride?
Thy deeds of fame have reach’d me here,
And fell they on a grateful ear;
Rise, chieftain, by St. David, thou
In Aber’s halls art welcome now.”

“Thanks, sire, for thy courtesy,
The chief self outlawed I am he—
Though thou art pleased with deeds of fame,
To recollect my hated name;
Yet know I well that crime and guilt
Are synonymes for Tewdwr Wylt.
But, oh ! believe me from my heart,
I’ve Cambria loved, in all, in part;
My steel has glittered for the Celt,
But traitors, none its edge have felt:
Yet save the few who own my sway,
Who only follow me for prey;
What have I won from all my race,
But detestation, and disgrace?
My name has made the cheek turn pale,
Has made both sire and young man quail;

Has been the spell to fright to rest
The infant on its mother's breast :
And when in social festive glee,
With harp and song in harmony,
My countrymen around the fire
Have hush'd the soft notes of the lyre,
And matrons cross'd their brows for fear,
If Tewdwr's name but reach'd their ear—
Until at last the vulgar deem,
I'm more than what my form would seem.
Thou, sire, has doubtless heard these tales,
Long echo'd through our native vales ;
Behold (he sadly smiled) in me,
The monster of iniquity.

“ The stricken deer may not return,
Though for its herd its heart may burn,
For those with whom he has been bred,
With whom for years he long has fed,
His panting form no sooner see,
With footsteps dragging wearily,
Than in relentless cruelty
With heartless man they even vie,
Nor cease to worry till in death
He sinks upon his native heath.
'Tis so when in prosperity,

Unnumbered friends on all sides spring,
The first blast of adversity
Sees them like swallows on the wing,

When autumn's winds are growing chill,
And shades lie longer on the hill.

Nor do they only fly away,

But, viper-like, they turn and bite ;
Their former friend becomes their prey—

Past kindness with revenge requite—
Unpitied more, the more forlorn—
More helpless, the more keen their scorn.

“ And I am one who this have known,
Such fearful knowledge is my own ;
I've drunk the cup of bitterness,
O'erflowing with my deep distress :
But it is not man's destiny,
Like the poor deer, to turn and die ;
E'en as he suffers, must he bear
His load of grief, of pain, and care :
And I have suffer'd, and have borne,
But like the rock my frame is worn—
The floods of feeling, as they roll'd
A madd'ning torrent uncontroll'd,
Have graven lines upon my face,
The which no power can erase.
But still my mind is unsubdued,
I soar above the sickly brood,
And heart proof, all their scorn despise,
And some my sword may yet chastise—
'Tis this, my Prince, has brought me here
To claim alone thy royal ear.”

“Chieftain, say on—thy tale confide!”
While thus dark Tewdwr Wylt replied :

“Firstly, I bear glad tidings—one
Who unto thee refused to own
Allegiance, would now return,
And loyalty again would learn—
Yes, Griffith, Lord of Powys fair,
To thee, great prince, would fealty swear.”
“How know’st thou this?” Llewelyn cried.
“E’en from his son, his father’s pride,
Than whom no truer lives on earth,
Of greater—or more loyal worth.
Nor is it for myself alone
I’ve left my rocks and heather brown :
His fate is mingled with my own,
And when his victory is won,
Partly my aim will be obtain’d—
Partly will vengeance be attain’d.
I speak in riddles—thou hast heard,
That he who now is Diserth’s lord,
Has one sweet child, whose lovely face
A monarch’s nuptial couch might grace :
She is adored by Griffith’s son,
Owain would make her all his own—
But Hugh De Lacy deep hath sworn,
That ere the holy sabbath’s morn,
(To gratify ambition’s pride)
His child shall be another’s bride.”

He paused—resumed again—“Thine eyes,
My Prince, are glitt’ring with surprise,
That one of my stern mould should care
An enterprise like this to share:
But let it boldly be confessed,
Not love alone inspires my breast,
For rage and hate impel me now,
De Lacy is my mortal foe.
Death is a paltry punishment,
Yet with it I must be content—
The torture most prolonged will cease,
The victim would obtain release,
Long, long ere I could satiate
Half my revenge, and cherish’d hate.
But I would give him love and peace,
Crown him with earthly happiness;
Give him an honest heart, a breast
Where dark suspicion ne’er did rest.
Withal, a soul susceptible,
Which every sneer would keenly feel,
And then from this bright pinnacle
I’d hurl him by a single blow
To writhe in horror, grief, and woe,
And by experience let him learn
The passions which in mankind burn,
So that he should imagine well
What might be the reward of hell.

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“Such power, alas, can ne’er be mine,
Such wishes I must fain resign;

Relying on my trusty steel,
 Be the result for woe or weal—
 And had my fate hung singly, I
 Alone would strike for victory :
 Back'd by my trusty band, I'd scale
 His walls—if destin'd then to fail,
 My sword should find a bloody sheath,
 E'en if its owner slept in death.
 Thus have I sought thee, Prince, for aid,
 Lest our attack in vain be made—
 Two nights from this Lord Griffith's men,
 With mine, march down the Clwyd's fair glen;
 There wilt thou deign our force to meet,
 And thus insure our foe's defeat?"

"Tewdwr, thy prayer is granted. Look!"
 The chieftain's hand his sov'reign took,
 And led him to the casement, where
 In distance tow'ring high in air,
 The cliffs of Penmaenmawr arose,
 A bulwark 'gainst invading foes.
 The camp fires o'er its peaks ascending,
 Where with the light gray vapours blending—
 The sentinels as specks seem'd there—
 A rush in distance, rose each spear.
 "Behold!" he said, "on yonder heights,
 The heroes of a hundred fights!
 Chieftain, ere we your tale had heard,
 Fore-doom'd by us was Diserth's lord.

We mean to win our native right,
Events th' attempt at once invite.
Yes, we will raze each Norman tower,
That o'er the march doth proudly lour
On this side Dee's and Severn's floods,
Or dye their waters with our bloods.
Then, Tewdwr, speed, and raise thy men,
We meet within the Clwyd's fair glen.
Yet, stay—there's that upon thy brow,
Which bids us ask thee, who art thou?
Our eye has ne'er proved false—thy air
A noble birthright doth declare !”

A mournful look of former pride,
By just esteem now gratified,
Swept o'er his features, but its gleam
 Though sweet, it was so melancholy,
Like the pale arch which the moonbeam
 Indents upon the midnight sky,
Compared with those prismatic rays
Which glisten in the noontide's blaze.
“I'm one,” he said, “in years by-gone,
Who wealth, and honour, rank have known.
Never the fallen oak should boast
 Of its lost name, and regal state,
When battered, broken on the coast,
 Left by the waves—the doom'd of fate,
With sea-weed winding o'er each bough,
Where once the ivy loved to grow,

Hurl'd by some chance upon the beach,
And if beyond the waters' reach,
Yet time has mark'd it for its prey,
Slowly it crumbles in decay.
The prostrate oak, my Prince, am I:
Hurl'd by life's storm upon the tide,
To ocean drifted steadily,
Where rest 'mid turmoil is denied,
Though wearied, shatter'd 'mid its strife,
I have preserved my worthless life,
While I have seen amid the waves,
Thousands on thousands find their graves.
Partly through pride, and part through scorn,
The tempest's fury have I borne,
Because I would not sink with those
Who did anticipate their close,
And meanly die, in sheer despair,
Ere death had claim'd them for his share.

“ Had other asked me, Prince, than thou,
I would have bid him read my brow,
Where the deep lines engraven there,
My title and my doom declare;
As it I feel would loud proclaim,
“ A son of crime ”—my lawful name—
My destiny should be the same,
All that a guilt-stain'd heart may claim.
To say that others sin as I,
Whose deeds are of a darker dye,
Is not a cloak for infamy :

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I will not shrink, or tremble now,
When I cannot recall the blow
Which made me what I now appear,
Hopeless and heartless, lone and drear;
A self-detested wretch, whose doom,
Enveloped in eternal gloom,
Sees naught to brighten, naught to cheer,
Naught to revivify the sear
And shrunken heart, whilome
Was verdant in affection's bloom.
Who am I? list to the reply—
'Tis echo answers, 'Who am I?'—
Upon the barren northern shore,
Where frozen billows burst no more,
Where night with day cleaves time in twain,
And sunbeams shiver on the plain,
There nature makes the scene her own,
And forests wide are turn'd to stone.
Speak to those monuments of trees,
Which frown beside those frozen seas;
Ask them if they were ever green,
Or 'neath the arctic breezes keen,
They ever bent their lofty forms,
Or quivered in the northern storms;
Mute to the query—what were ye?
Or echo mocks you listlessly.
Such am I to the world, to thee
My nature changes—let it be,
I humbly crave, in secrecy
Confided, till the time when I
Need to explain this mystery."

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He whispered—not the wind might hear
What fell upon his sov'reign's ear.

The Tanat's stream was floating by,
With pleasing soothing melody,
While the soft murm'ring of its wave
Was echo'd in the lonely cave
Where Newryst late had warmly sued,
And staid the spilling gentle blood.
But now upon a couch she lay,
Of mosses form'd with lichens gray,
Watching the fast receding day,
And marking one by one appear,
The stars which glitter'd in the sphere,
Till night had donn'd her jewell'd robe,
T' entrance the mortals of the globe.
“He lingers, lingers still,” she sighed;
“Oh! will it be to me denied
To gaze on him, ere earth and sky
Fade from my dim and dark'ning eye?
I've fondly ta'en my long farewell
Of rock and cliff, and wood and dell;
It was a sweet adieu—my last,
And bitter—but the pang is past.
But, oh, that I again may see
Those eyes, which as they turn on me,
Seem to convey upon their glance,
A power which doth my soul entrance,
And life renewing gives, that I
Feel vig'rous still when he is nigh.

Oh, Tewdwr—hark !” now clear and shrill,
A whistle echoes from the hill.

“ ’Tis he !” she cried—a moment more,
The chief her form was bending o’er.

“ How fares it, Newryst, with thee now ?”
He pass’d his hand across her brow ;
He started, for the dew drops stood
In thick array, and chill’d his blood.
She feebly pointed to her breast,
A ruby drop had stain’d the vest,
Then raised to his her gentle eye,
As if she said, my hour is nigh.
He knew, he felt that speaking look,
Within his heart its power awoke
That aching grief which knows no peace,
Nor e’en expires in weariness ;
And though his wells of tears were dry,
His bursting heart bled inwardly.
Long, long he gazed—’twas hard to bear
The thought, that one so young, so fair,
Was doom’d thus soon to pass away,
So short and fleeting her young day.
As when upon the ocean toss’d,
Slowly we leave the well-known coast,
A ling’ring glance behind we cast,
On long loved scenes receding fast,
And mark the shore grow dim, until
Is lost in distance rock and hill,

Fondly we watch the fading view,
Perchance it is our last adieu.
So Tewdwr mark'd her lovely face,
Pale, clearly pale, where he could trace
The swift approaching change, ere yet
The maiden's evening sun was set.
Sparkled her eyes as oft they shine
Large, lust'rous, clear in life's decline,
Ere their bright gaze on earth is clouded,
Their brilliancy for ever shrouded,
When the dark lids shall ope no more,
The seal which signs the struggle's o'er.
Her auburn hair in tresses fell,
Forming a glossy filmy veil,
As o'er the bosom of the maid,
In careless negligence they strayed.

Tewdwr had deem'd her beautiful,
The flower he hardly cared to cull;
But not till now it with'ring lay,
When life was yielding to decay,
Enclasp'd in death's unyielding arms,
Had he perceived her heavenly charms—
And if till now he had not known
How bright the vision almost flown,
He had not dream'd how round his heart
She was entwined, and how 'twould wring
His inmost soul from her to part,
How deep would strike the venom'd sting.

The vain delusion disappear'd,
 His bosom felt no longer sear'd,
 And wildly, yes, despairingly,
 He gloated on the only tie
 Which, though to him unconsciously,
 Yet bound him unto human things,
 And pleasure drew from earthly springs;
 He feels it but his loss to know,
 And doubly keen descends the blow.

Newryst the silence broke. "The day
 Has sunk in night, each ling'ring ray
 No more with parting brilliancy
 Tints o'er the balmy summer sky:
 I've gazed my last upon the sun,
 For me its task is ever done;
 When next it shines, its genial rays
 Will fail to warm me with their blaze:
 I've gazed my last on wood and stream,
 Save that which now the pale star's beam
 Dimly reveals in misty shade,
 Confusing rocks, and glen, and glade:
 Now all seems spiritual around—
 All indistinct, yet grand, profound—
 All mystical, and darkly strange,
 Tewdwr, like my approaching change;
 Tell me, while lingers yet my breath,
 What may we mortals hope in death?

“ In early days I hoped and feared,
And brightly through life’s mists appear’d
The vision of a future state,
When death my mind would contemplate:
While then the Deity had one,
Who worshipped not with lips alone,
And had life closed, as life begun,
I ne’er had mourn’d its course had run.
But change swept o’er both life and thought,
My future hopes I deem’d were naught,
And valued man but as the clod,
On which as nature’s lord he trod;
Recall a few short days, then I
Would thus have judged humanity ;
But now my bosom doubts again,
Immortal may belong to men ;
Perchance like some demented one,
Who ere his darkened course is run,
Receives his intellectual light,
Which sparkles for a moment bright,
Like sunbeams bursting through at eve,
 When o’er the day dark gloom has hung ;
A cheerful glow to earth they give,
 As their receding rays are flung,
Yet brighten but to disappear,
To gild again some other sphere.
So I it may be have lived on,
And truth unclouded ne’er have known,
Therefore I yet may give the lie
To all my former sophistry.

“ As o’er the hills this day I sped,
Noontide had passed, a dense fog spread
Itself before, around, beneath—
Suddenly a gorgeous wreath
Of heavenly hues before me shone,
Surrounding a still brighter one.
Within the centre of the ring,
Armed to the teeth, the spirit king
Stood there—I spoke, it was in vain,
No answer gave he back again ;
And then my hand my heart obeyed,
Instinctively the sign it made,
That sign disused so long: in haste
An airy cross my fingers traced—
Melted the vision into air,
When e’en I almost breathed a prayer.
This is no proof—no miracle,
But bubbles on the clear stream will
Reveal the current’s course, as well
As billows which on ocean swell.
Then, Newryst, know, I doubt—if thou
Hast hope beyond to cheer thee now,
Cling to its brightness—would that I
Felt aught could glad futurity.

“ Yes, I have hoped, and something more ;
Bright visions steal my senses o’er,
And gently soothe my trembling heart,
So that I fear not to depart.

From childhood's hour, save thee alone,
No guardian, teacher have I known;
Alone I've roved the heather wild,
The scenes around us have beguiled;
My years with never wearying power;
Ne'er have I known a heavy hour—
So that I feel I may be styled,
That name I love, e'en nature's child.
Oft when I've cropp'd the lilies fair,
To wreath a garland for my hair
I've paused to wonder at the skill
That form'd those gems which deck the rill;
Then has my bosom long'd to know,
Who bid those lovely blossoms grow—
I asked my heart, it could not tell;
With tearful eyes I'd leave the dell:
Yet oft the same fond task pursuing,
As oft the same fond theme renewing,
I'd ask, why is the mountain side,
With purple heather deeply dyed?
And wherefore do not violets grow
Where lingers long the mountain snow?
Or wherefore, 'mid the toppling crags,
Bloom not the gaudy yellow flags?
Or willows bud on peaks as well
As flourish in the greenwood dell?
I ask'd, at length the answer came
As soft as air, as clear as flame—
He who thus beautifies the sod,
Is earth's Creator, and thy God.

“ The holy truth was extacy ;
It gave new charms to all I saw ;
Nature became a book to me,
Whereon was graven heaven’s law :
Self-taught I studied, and I felt
Truths which would cause my heart to melt
With admiration at the scheme,
Wonder and praise my mingled theme.
Thus saw I months and seasons close,
But yet no higher hope arose ;
No thought of an eternity
Disturb’d my heart’s serenity.

“ One eve, beneath an oak reclining,
I watch’d an autumn’s sun declining ;
The blast, in eddies whirling round,
Bestrewed with withered leaves the ground :
My heart was sadder than its wont,
I could not drink from nature’s font,
Those draughts which ne’er had failed to cool
The fev’rish thirsting of my soul :
The earth seem’d cold, the woods were sear,
The clouds above hung dense and drear ;
The distant hills, the vale beneath,
Wore sombre signs of nature’s death,
And nature’s hectic hue of red,
On wood, on wild, and sky was spread ;
Mourning, I gazed with tearful eye,
How all on earth was doom’d to die :

And then the thought to me returning,
While I o'er nature's fate was mourning,
That not remote would be the day
When death would claim me for his prey.

“ A rugged cliff before me rose,
The rushing waters wash'd its base,
Its healthy summit doth inclose
Many a warrior's resting-place,
Where high above the rolling wave,
Thy followers have found a grave :
Upon that lonely cemet'ry,
The setting sun-beams soft did lie,
Gilding with a resplendent light
The tombs of those who fell in fight.
How silently they sleep, I said ;
Shall they who in cold death are laid
For ever rest ? Is there no part,
Which to young life again may start ?
Can it be man's nobility
E'en less than dust at last to be ?
How great in life—in death how small,
If death, and then decay, end all !

“ O ! who shall teach my aching heart ?
O ! who shall holy truth impart ?
Men worship—in the distance thou
Hast shown me where their spires arise,
'Neath which the bended knee they bow,
And pour their incense to the skies :

No form of holy words were mine,
To breathe forth to the All Divine ;
But that which I could best express,
In feeble, pure devotedness,
With fervour deep, I offered there,
In humble and in earnest prayer,
That He who deign'd the earth to bless
With daily proofs of tenderness,
Would not refuse to teach me now,
All that mortality need know.
Think not some miracle was given,
To teach my soul the road to heav'n,
Or vision spread before my eyes,
Or voice supernal from the skies :
No sight or sound was on the air,
 With deep astonishment to fill
My heart, in answer to my prayer,
 Such was not the Creator's will ;
But it was heard, and answered, yes,
With soul-convincing truthfulness.
A peace I ne'er before had known,
An untold peace, was now my own,
Which fill'd my heart with happiness,
Oh ! more than words can well express.

“ As when upon a winter's waste,
 The traveller wandering to and fro,
The path—each landmark all effaced—
 In the confusing robe of snow,
Just as the day is lost in night,
Beholds some cottage hearth's bright light,

In the dim distance bright and clear,
A signal of deliv'rance near,
With hope renewed and lighter stride,
He presses on to reach his guide—
So I felt lighter, happier far,
My heavenly guide, my bosom's star,
Which shone within with radiant light,
Illumining my mental night.
Thou knowest how hope the breast will cheer,
How each success doth make appear
The long'd-for triumph seem more nigh,
A sweet foretaste of victory.
He who by night and day doth pore
O'er what we deem forbidden lore,
Chimeras vainly still pursuing,
Yet day by day his task renewing,
And though his end is never won,
His weary task at death undone,
Still as along those darksome roads
The alchymist unwearying plods,
Some petty triumphs in his art
Cheer and refresh his longing heart,
And spur him to his task again,
With fev'rish pulse and throbbing brain.
Oh! how much more than I who strove
To learn our claim to live above,
Was gladdened by each blest success,
Which taught eternal happiness;
Though oft discouraged, doubting, drooping,
Beneath a load of darkness stooping,

Yet like the flower before the storm,
Which meekly bends its feeble form,
But lifts its head unharm'd again
When tempests no more shake the glen,
So, when my gloomy hour was past,
I'd rise above the mental blast ;
Each triumph made the truth more clear,
And my new faith more loved, more dear.

“ There is in prayer a wond'rous power
To soothe the aching human breast,
When life's dark clouds around us lour,
And fear is on the heart impress'd.
Its own peculiar charm it bears,
It gilds our hopes, and soothes our cares :
Like music to the human ear,
Like water to the famish'd hind,
Like light which bursts on darkness drear,
Or like the halcyon evening wind
Which sweeps across the arid plains,
Where the bright sun unclouded reigns ;
Like calms which still the billows' roll,
Is prayer unto the human soul.
The blind, who live in endless night,
Can never know the joys of light ;
No words their hopeless loss can paint,
Speech is too poor, its power too faint.
Then how much more are words too weak
The holy joys of prayer to speak

To those who have not known its worth,
To soothe the feeble sons of earth.
It is the voice by angels known,
 It is the language of the skies ;
'Tis heard by God upon his throne,
 And seraphs feel new extacies,
When, with their songs and hymns of praise,
 Which echo through the heavenly air,
Rising aloft in glorious lays,
 Mingles the voice of human prayer.
It is the best loved sound on high,
Which pierces through the azure sky ;
Yes, all the strains of heav'n's best lyres,
Though angel's fingers wake the wires,
And gushing notes of melody
 In streams of sound steal on the ear
With such delicious harmony,
 That heaven's high King e'en deigns to hear,
Are still less sweet than those which we
Pour forth unto the Deity,
For hush'd is ev'ry holy note
When prayer above doth softly float.
Oh ! would the heart know peace on earth,
Taste joy of an immortal birth,
And feel the purest happiness
Which e'er the human soul can bless,
While yet enshrined in mould'ring clay,
Then lowly bend the knee, and pray.
The highest privilege e'er given,
The noblest, the best gift of heav'n,

To us poor creatures of the clod,
Is soul communion with our God.

“ Thus, Tewdwr, prayer has been to me
A chain of holy sympathy,
By which I’ve measured hope and fear,
And learned to know that help is near.
The veil no more obscured my eyes,
Oft have I started with surprise,
That never earlier burst on me
The truth of immortality.
I saw it in the sun which sets,
And yet the morning ne’er forgets ;
The seasons mark’d it as they roll’d,
Renewed with youth, thus never old ;
’Twas written in the leaf which dies,
Yet spring-tide ever beautifies ;
’Twas painted on the rolling stream,
Which shrinks ’neath summer’s scorching beam,
But yet returns in clouds again,
To fill the rills which cool the glen ;
’Twas graven on the ruin’d walls,
Where the lone footstep seldom falls,
Though when in its most lordly hour,
In all the pride of warlike power,
Frowns o’er the vale some baron’s tower :
On wall and battlement no eye,
The hidden germ of life can trace,
But let the towers deserted be,
Bright verdure springs, and winds with grace

Round battlement and buttress bare,
In waving garlands green and fair.
Yet more, 'twas graven in my breast—
My heart of hearts, when ask'd, confess'd
A heavenly spark which could not die,
A germ of immortality,
Which could not in this frame of clay
 Burst into its eternal bloom,
Until my form should ruin'd lay,
 Deserted in the lonely tomb.

“This, Tewdwr, is my firm belief,
And now it soothes and calms the grief
I feel at leaving all I love,
And thou art all—save One above.
Oh! if I felt 'twas very death,
When I shall yield my failing breath;
That then my eyes would close for ever,
The earth, the skies to gaze on never;
That black decay—the silent tomb
Would be my everlasting doom—
At first an object of disgust,
And then a tiny heap of dust,
Mingling with earth—from earth unknown:
If this dark faith I dared to own,
What misery, what grief were mine,
In this, my early life's decline.
But see, I smile: not forced my joy,
I could not now deceit employ;

While but one shade is dimly stealing,
And but one sad and painful feeling,
Which, Tewdwr, has its birth with thee,
In thy dark infidelity.
Reflect once more while life is thine,
Quench not within that spark divine,
List to that voice in silence speaking,
Turn to thy God in humble seeking,
Then thou shalt feel those truths I know,
And peace thy heart shall overflow.
I leave thee, and am happy still ;
In reverence I own His will ;
God's spirit cheers me—day and night
I gaze on visions heavenly bright,
And hear such music, that I long
To join in the seraphic song ;
E'en now, before me there appears
A crystal cross, which Faith uprears ;
Hope points beside it to the sign,
Bidding me make the symbol mine :
I seize it—'tis the bond of peace,
Which bids each shade of doubting cease.

“My voice is failing—I would die,
Breathing my last long, ling'ring sigh
In one fond gush of melody.”
Her harp was brought, beside her placed,
Partly reclining, partly raised ;
O'er her low couch her fair form bending,
Her dying beauty far transcending

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Her loveliest hour in bygone days,
Though then the eye might never gaze
On aught more lovely ; but she now
Seem'd to be none of earth—her brow
With light was diadem'd—the first
Of the eternal rays had burst
Refulgent on the glorious prize,
So soon to grace the heavenly skies.
Soft, like some gentle reverie,

 Were the first tones her fingers woke ;
Then deeper grew the melody,
 Until in thrilling sweetness broke
The full-tide strain, which vig'rous fire
Alone can call forth from the lyre ;
It rose and fell in waves of sound,
 Like billows on the heaving sea ;
Now high and clear, now deep profound,
 Then in a flood of harmony ;
And now her voice was feebly lent
In low and soft accompaniment,
Till, by the theme inspired, it came,
As life had lent anew its flame.

Song.

“ Farewell to the scenes of my early days !
Farewell to each vale and dell !
To the greenwood glades, to the tangled maze,
In the nooks where the fountains swell.

“Oh! ye have no longer charms for me,
Though I loved you as woman loves,
When fondly I’ve roam’d in the forests free,
Or linger’d in your groves.

“Farewell to the song of the wild cascade,
As it dash’d in the sparkling spray;
Farewell to the lilies I lov’d to braid,
So pure, so bright, and gay.

“Farewell to the earth!—it is passing from
me —
To all which below I love;
And, Tewdwr, farewell—farewell to thee—
But, oh, may we meet above!

“There’s music in the midnight air,
The darkness is light to me;
Fair forms of such beauty, so rich and rare,
Are waking rich melody.

“The earth and thy form are fading away,
Yet my vision is bright and clear;
For the heavenly light of eternal day
Now bursts upon the sphere.

“There’s gladness and joy in the look of those
Whom I gaze on with delight;
Who fondly are watching my mortal close
From the gates on the heavens bright.

“Why lingers my soul? See, see, they come—
They leave the portal now;
Swift earthwards they speed to bear me home,
While fervour gilds each brow.”

She ceased her hold, her hands collapsed,
The harp her taper fingers grasp'd
Fell on the floor, and falling, broke—
The harpist and the strain she woke
Together pass'd away; they died
United—death could not divide
Their love: the sweet-toned instrument
Clung to the last to her who lent
Her wond'rous native skill to wring
The living music from its string:
As though a spirit's was the lyre,
To know above its well-tuned wire
'Twould there be struck by her again,
Wakened to an immortal strain.

Thus pass'd she from this fleeting scene:
Death stamp'd no horror on her mien—
She lay as if she slept, still wreathed
In smiles her mouth, as if she breathed,
And that a pleasing dream in sleep
She gazed upon. But it was deep,
Too deep, that slumber—the still breast
Heav'd and rose no more: in rest

'Twas passive—all so beautiful;
No wasted features—pale, but full—
The round arms motionless:
'Twas hard to mingle nothingness
In thought with that fair flower,
Cropp'd in its brightest, loveliest hour,
While naught which told of earth's decay
Was near her: as the full moon's ray,
When no clouds o'er the blue night stray,
Upon the water lingers, thus she lay—
A gleam of beauty of as brief a stay. }
As when a single chord is struck,
One note of music boldly woke;
List, as the full tone softly dies,
In quick succession sweetly floats
The sound of other dying notes,
And these are Nature's harmonies,
In concord mingling, clear yet low,
The purest cadence sound can know.
But these are lost when, flowing free,
We listen to a melody—
When music bursts in liquid strain,
Soft'ning, then swelling loud again:
So beauty, vig'rous, bright, and gay,
In mem'ry hath a briefer stay,
Than when we gaze on loveliness,
Which Death does as a prize possess.
When the lone heart is comfortless,
O'erpowered with its deep distress,

To gaze upon the well loved face,
Fleeting to us as mirror'd grace,
Faith must be strong indeed, if then
We own death is a benizen.

Whoe'er has watch'd the dying hour
Till Death has set his seal of power,
Without, o'er heart and senses, feeling
An awe unearthly, coldly stealing,
As, gazing on the silent form,
He sees the banquet of the worm?
Whence fled the spirit? No rent
Has to the soul a passage lent:
No fierce convulsion, all so still—
Oft beautiful, but growing chill:
No sound or whisper in the room,
No heavenly light, no fearful gloom;
Unoped the casement, doors still fast,
How has the heavenly essence pass'd?
The air unchanged, above, beneath,
No sign is there where entered death.
The cause unseen, the end alone
Proclaims in mute display—'tis done.
'Tis done, and this is all—the whole,
Men know, how God recalls the soul—
The mystery of Death—a road
We cannot learn, yet shall be trod;
Myriads have trod it, myriads must,
Ere at the last we take our dust

Again, and, like a robe thrown by,
We don our changed mortality.
Let Fancy wing a flight—behold
The dead of all the days of old,
Ere yet the eye can ope and close,
Together starting from their last repose
When sounds the trump—O earth! O earth!
Thy face is changed, the sod gives birth,
The waves have life; the forest trees,
The clouds, the gale, the breeze,
In dissolution tremble, mortal
At once together are they all,
Or what was mortal, prisoned in the storms,
The sea, the mould, resume their forms,
Earth flesh, air no longer air;
 The salt sea spray human is then,
With all the poor, the great, the fair,
When opes the universal grave,
 Which shall restore again to men
The godlike form the Maker gave.

Upon the dead dark Tewdwr gazed;
 He kissed her brow so smooth and cold,
Fondly arranged her robe displaced;
 No tear drops from his dark eyes roll'd—
No outward sign the grief reveal'd
Within his harrow'd breast conceal'd.
“Once more alone—alone! . . . once more
 Has my poor anguish'd breast been riven,

My love is wither'd to its core,
Only to torture me 'twas given.
The hopes, the joys, which bless my race
Are changed to a dark curse with me,
While Peace has turn'd away her face,
And smiling Rest has pass'd me by.
Life, life, why dost thou chain me now?
Why bind thy bands around my heart?
Oh, let Oblivion's waters flow—
From earth, O give me to depart—
In Lethe taste forgetfulness,
In dissolution drown distress.
Existence, thou dost torture me,
Each moment adds to misery . . .
All, all is past."—"Not all; repent!
Life is not given, 'tis but lent."
Starting, he turn'd—beside him stood
A holy nun in gown and hood.
"Rash man!" she said, "complain no more,
Think of thy doom when life is o'er."
He trembled at her words, the tone
Seem'd to his ears not all unknown.
"Who, then, art thou?"—"A nun am I,
Living in hope of clemency.
But whose was this poor form?" She bent
O'er the fair corpse with look intent,
Then, with a stern and searching eye,
On Tewdwr for his heart's reply.

"Nay, harm her not in thought," he cried.
"There, sister, sleeps my destined bride.

Last of her race, I've cherish'd her,
But did not dream she could confer
On me a love I dared not claim,
Since mine *was* but affection's name.
I was her guardian, teacher, guide,
And she my solace ; by my side
She linger'd till the bud became
The flower, which now is but a name.
She would not leave me ; when I breathed
The theme, her gentle spirit grieved.
Thus years roll'd by, and no more still,
E'en in my dreams, unto my chill,
Cold bosom, was she ever than
A companion ; but pale and wan,
Her cheek so bright and tinted, grew ;
And then a warmer sympathy
My soul betrayed. At last I knew—
It was confess'd by her blue eye—
I was beloved ; and many days
Have not pass'd by since first my gaze
Was deepen'd to that ardent glance
Which souls united doth entrance.
But let me ask thy mission here,
'Mid these cold hills and valleys drear ?”

“ At Saint Nonita's holy shrine,
A nun the sacred vows has ta'en,
And with the strictest discipline
She seeks to wipe away a stain
Of blackest hue ; but all in vain

Have been her efforts to suppress
Her grief's soul-sadd'ning bitterness,
Till from the wrong'd one's lips she hears
The charm to bid her dry her tears ;
But for this boon she yet doth live,
To hear him say, ' Yes, I forgive.'
And she has bid me seek this glen
To win this priceless benizen."

Dark Tewdwr bent on her his eye,
To read if it were mockery ;
She met his gaze—he could not tell
Where he had known that glance so well.
He mutter'd, "'Tis my fever'd brain—
That look I ne'er shall see again."
And then aloud, " If thou didst seek
A spell to cause the heart to break,
And drown a life in misery,
That I perchance could give to thee—
At least I could full plainly tell
How to make earth a living hell.
Search on yon mountains towering high
For the perfum'd flowers of Araby ;
Seek where the Tanat's whirlpools curl
For sunny India's snowy pearl ;
Or where the mountain torrent gleams
For scorching Afric's priceless gems ;
Or in yon broken, wild ravine
For the ruby clusters of the vine ;

But seek not here a charm to bless
An aching heart with happiness.

“What unity have I with man?
An outlaw—’neath the Church’s ban—
A price upon my head:—if this
Were all, I’d deem existence bliss—
Their petty power I *scorn*. But no;
Plung’d headlong in th’ abyss of woe;
Descending deeper as the days roll on,
Each day some keener anguish known,
Without the end of torture. I’d thought
Grief would its antidote have brought,
That I should callous grow at last.
Vain hope! I suffer—and the past
With the dark future are fraught still,
With my curse, which I must fulfil.
Then, holy sister, seek not here
The spell a penitent to cheer.
She where my last hope lies—yes, there—
Dust, nothingness—soon will that fair,
Lovely shrine of purity become—
She loved me, and it was her doom.
There is a poison in my love,
All die, or worse—all faithless prove
To whom I cling for sympathy,
And who repay their love on me.
’Twas ever thus—’tis yet the same.
A tree which calls from heav’n the flame,

To slaughter those who rest beneath,
Repaying confidence with death
Unwittingly, is not more fatal
Than I have ever been to all
Who have conferr'd their hearts on me:
And this, the last, has perish'd; she
Was earth's last tie, and my delight—
The one lone star which lit my night—
Now set in darkness ever, when
She might have been my benizen.
The widow'd mother, when her last
Child dies, her agonies are past
All soothing; but I feel still more . . .
Leave me, and let me loud outpour
My curse unto the frowning sky,
And then expire in blasphemy."

"Hush, hush, rash man, thy impious strain,
Or thou wilt wake the dead again:
I bid thee hear me—there is one,
Who wrong'd thee once, now would atone
For that offence—'tis mine to bear
Her earnest prayer." "I will not hear;
The penitent may suffer yet,
Or rather the dark deed forget,
I care not; from the living world
I'm severed—it for years has hurl'd
Its shafts at me, we've naught in common.
As I have lived, I'll die—alone,

Nor heed the sentence on my fame—
An outlaw or a traitor's name.”
“Is there no spell, no charm, no word,
That I can utter, which when heard
Will bid thee listen to my tale?”
“Sister, no power can avail;
In mercy leave me with the dead:
I would gaze on her, as the pale stars shed
Their glory o'er her beauteous face,
And by their trembling light I'd trace,
And grave each lineament again
Indelibly on heart and brain,
And brand them there, ere naught remains
Save that which loveliness disdains.
Now while she seems to sleep, and fancy may
Recall some faintly ling'ring ray
Of happiness, if I can banish
The thoughts of death, and bid them vanish,
Ere yet the truth shall plainly burst
To tell me that I am accurs'd.
Deny me not this fleeting pleasure,
For thou can'st never, never measure
My agony as I gaze on
Her form—no more—no more my own;
And thought comes darkly stealing,
The truth unto my heart revealing,
'Tis but a mask of loveliness,
A prize of death, and ransomless;
While he, in very wantonness,

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Mocks at my grief and will not sign
The ruin of my passion's shrine,
But in the cold parade of beauty,
Leaves her as she was wont to be,
Recalling thus, with tenfold power,
The horror of this fearful hour.
Leave me to ponder, gaze on death,
To learn the lurking cause beneath ;
To watch the changes one by one,
Slowly, steadily, steal on:
For while one charm remains for me,
One ling'ring grace I can espy,
Which in the past such pleasure gave,
I'll save her from the yawning grave,
Till dissolution comes to prove
That I her form may cease to love."

"Chieftain," again the nun replied,
"I will not be by thee denied ;
I have a spell thy grief to slake,
Even if it the dead should wake
Once more to scenes of mortal life—
I bid thee listen—to thy wife."
Doubting a moment, Nesta stood,
Then threw aside her robe and hood,
Fell at her husband's feet, and there
Mercy implored, in mute despair.
"Then this is madness—it has come
To crown my destiny's dark doom,

I feel my blood in fury driven,
Through my wild brain my mind is riven
By the shock : I have borne—borne well,
But now the towering citadel
Of Intellect has fallen to the foe,
In ruins heap'd by this last blow !
Oh, it is frightful, horrible !
The dead are waking, and their dull
Cold eyes are glaring on me—yes,
Strange forms now start from the abyss,
Unearthly voices speak to me.
E'en now a nun was here, and she
Prayed to impart a tale—the dead—

Is that a vision too? Alas !
The stars above still brightly shed
Their pure soft radiance on her face ;
That which I would were false, is true,
And phantoms cease not to pursue.
My wife—whom I in frenzy slew—
Is here. I know I did imbrue
My hands in her warm blood; have I
Not mourn'd the deed in agony?
And in exchange would aye have given
All that was mine on earth, life even.
Avaunt, avaunt ! this is not judgment,
That ye my crimes in serried front
Should now array yourselves : as yet
Mortal I am—life is not set.

Leave me, ye furies ! I have more
Than I can bear. As I deplore

Her death, I will approach the corse—

'Twill be a shield of proof to me;

And I will dare your fiendish curse,

• Defy your deep malignity.”

Nesta could bear no more—she sprung

Unto her feet, and wildly flung

Her arms around him. “God of heaven!”

She cried, “oh, let him not be driven

To madness!—spare us this last blow.

In mercy soothe him, soothe him now!

Oh, Tewdwr, doubt me not—’tis I,

Still mortal, the sad and guilty

Author of thy griefs, who through years

Of penitence and bitter tears,

Yet look’d with longing, aching eye,

Through dark and dim futurity,

To this fond hour, when at thy feet

I should my outraged husband meet:

To sue—t’ implore—that thou wouldst bless

Me, and forgive my faithlessness.”

Upon his hand her warm tears fell—

All doubts and mystery farewell:

“It is no dream, still life is thine,

And thou art Nesta. Powers divine!

Humbly I bow my head, and own

It is the work of God alone.”

Long was their mutual tale—she said

How that his dagger’s vengeful blade

Glanced from her side; that fear and shame
 Bid her assume another name.
 In varied garbs through life she'd pass'd
 Wearied and worn with change; at last,
 At Saint Nonita's holy shrine,
 She'd vow'd to wait her life's decline.
 One task for her alone remain'd—
 And now the priceless boon was gain'd
 To soothe the years she yet might live—
 Tewdwr had said, "Yes, I forgive."

"Where, Nesta, is our only son?"
 "He lives, and unto thee is known.
 In Poole's old halls, a menial, I
 Nursed him unto maturity,
 My songs his infancy beguiled—
 Yes, Tewdwr, Owain is our child."
 The stern man shook. "Again I see
 An overruling Deity.
 But, Nesta, where is Griffith's son?"
 "Listen, my tale is not yet done.
 In Cambria's court he liveth there,
 A simple page is Griffith's heir:
 Be it thy task to tell the youth
 He is of noble birth, in truth."
 They parted, and the woman wept—
 Tewdwr away the tear drops swept.
 "Thou knowest my seclusion, there,
 Should he—our child—should Owain care

To know his mother, bid him come
And seek me in my sainted home.
Farewell for ever ; may we meet,
Blest suppliants, at the mercy's seat.
Be this thy pledge of happiness—
May this dear sign thy future bless.”
Around his neck a cross she threw,
Hung from a chain of beads. “Adieu—
Once more adieu,”—’twas her last word,
As Nesta parted from her lord.

CANTO THE SIXTH.

I'VE listened to the rising gale,
Which as an infant from the sea
Breathes at its birth a feeble wail,
And moaneth piteously ;
Then clearer o'er the waves it swells,
And deepens in the billows' breast,
Bearing the music of the bells,
Which mark the seamen's hour of rest :
The only sound of life is this,
Which vibrates o'er the deep abyss ;
And as it echoes on the ear,
What mingling throbs of hope and fear
Are wakened by that melody,
Stealing at midnight from the sea,
As if its tones would shun the roar,
And happier die upon the shore !
Oh ! who can listen, and not feel
Those notes are oft a dying knell ?
Oh ! do they not with voice appeal,
And many a tale of horror tell ?
To me, when mingling with the surge,
They seem a solemn fun'ral dirge.

Oh! who on death can look, and think
He is but standing on the brink
Of that profound abyss, which we
In name know as eternity,
Without a solemn awe confessing,
His inmost heart and soul impressing?
Then who unto the storm can listen,
And mark the breakers brightly glisten,
With the blue glare from heav'n gleaming,
Upon the midnight tempest streaming,
But he a kindred awe must feel
At witnessing where oft the seal
Of death has stamped in such an hour
The mightiest triumphs of his power?

Some may have lived, and calmly died,
Who, floating on life's changing tide,
Have never needed from its storms
To guard and shield their favoured forms :
There may be some by fortune guided,
Whose barks have ever gently glided
Before ambrosial summer gales,
Which softly filled their swelling sails,
And ne'er have known a stormy sea
To check their strange prosperity.
But these are few—humanity
Can tell a very diff'rent tale,
For many know no fav'ring gale,
But live and die in misery,
Which the heart sickens at to see.

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“The poor.” Oh, God! what wretchedness
This word doth on the heart impress;
What pictures of despair and woe—
Of crime, disease: and myriads know
And feel these pangs the heart doth tell,
And truth proclaims, they ling’ring dwell
In ev’ry country, clime, on earth,
Where man, immortal man hath birth.

And there are some so cold in blood,
Who float like logs upon the flood;
Who but exist, and like the toad,
Enwrapped in frigid apathy,
Move like machines who hear, and see;
Or brutes, who perish with the blow,
Yet no anticipation know.
These are not happy—better far
Are those, whose overruling star
Mingles their lot, and gives them here
The smile of joy, and grief’s sad tear,
The varied fates of life to learn,
With hearts and souls to love and burn.
Yet dreary is the lot of those
Who first awake from life’s repose,
To listen to the first-born sigh
Of the tempest as it draweth nigh,
In distance moaning, ere its power
Sweeps o’er life’s first dark threat’ning hour.
Thus Gertrude listen’d—her young heart
Was heavy, and the tear would start,

And trickling fall, for wild and drear
 The rising tempest did appear,
 Which threaten'd the destruction now
 Of all she fondly loved below.

'Twas midnight, and the heavens above
 Looked through their thousand eyes on earth,
 Each planet radiant with deep love,
 That one might deem of ev'ry birth
 And death they are ordained to be
 The arbiters of destiny.

'Twas midnight, and the forest slept,
 The billows slumbered on the shore,
 The winds reposed, the sweet dew wept
 Their od'rous balsams in no stinted store,
 The zephyrs murmur'd, and the stream replied,
 The oak woods gently harmonied,
 And to the waterfall again
 It breathed its answer through the glen,
 As if it said—"My brother, peace
 Doth now all scenes of nature bless."
 "'Tis heaven's best gift," they all reply,
 In one soft strain of harmony.

And Gertrude gazed upon the scene
 With fevered look and burning brow;
 The darkened vale and woodland green
 Had lost their charms to soothe her now :

Upon her cheek the salt tear stood,
Like dew-drops on the pale white rose,
Where not a tint of glowing blood
To change its purity e'er flows:
Her soft hair o'er her bosom stray'd,
Through its long tresses softly play'd
The damp night wind, which could not cool
The burning fever of her soul.
Upon the wall her brow she press'd,
Until the stone grew warm beneath,
While quickly rose and fell her breast,
And almost gasping came her breath:
She'd watch'd the evening sun go down,
And brightly tint the mountains brown,
Till the last ling'ring glitt'ring ray
Grew pale, and softly died away;
She'd watch'd the evening star burst forth,
In purest radiance o'er the earth,
Marking where clearly like a dream
Its pure beams lingered on the stream;
But yet she'd watch'd unconsciously,
Nor heeded how the hours flew by,
For hope by turns with doubt and fear
Made day and night as one appear.

She started—on her arm was laid
A gentle touch. “My child has staid
Musing too long, the dew-drops now
Stand on thy hair, and damp thy brow.”

It was her ancient servitor,
Who thus resumed—"Let me implore
Thee to give o'er thy watch ; thy eyes
Are dim with weeping, and thy sighs
Sweeten in vain the summer air—
O, rest thee, rest thee, Ladye fair.
If not for me, let Owain plead—
Oh, seek that sleep you so much need!"
" 'Tis vain," she answered ; "sleep and I
For this night are at enmity ;
My lids, though heavy, will not close,
And all my senses shun repose ;
Anticipation rules the hour,
And I must bow before its power."

"At least upon thy couch recline,
And thus we'll watch the night's decline."
Gertrude this last request obeyed,
Her head upon the pillow laid,
Thinking aloud—" 'Tis hard to bear
So many hours of doubt and fear ;
How drearily doth time roll on !
Full oft it seems to me the sun
Is weary of its daily race,
And lingers with a slower pace :
Oh ! that I could, with angel step,
The intervening time o'erleap ;
This long drawn hope, this dark suspense,
Wrings every nerve and harrowed sense

More than the certainty of woe—
Yes, more than could the fatal blow.
The bow for ever bent will be
Soon of no worth for archery ;
The mind may not too much be taxed—
It snaps, unless at times relaxed :
If many a day were mine again,
Such as the past, I could sustain
No more their weight—but courage still,
Again I nerve my languid will.

“ Owain, thy image cheers me—yes,
I see thee, and thy fond caress
I almost feel upon my cheek,
While fancy bids me hear thee speak ;
Thou murm’rest patience—I will try
And calmly wait our destiny.”
She closed her eyes, and then she’d start,
Exclaiming, “ Press me to thy heart !”
Then doze again, and then exclaim—
“ He’s near me !” and repeat his name.
Then slowly, like the sea subsiding,
Where the storm steeds have late been striding :
Or, as some flower, fair and pale,
Long trembling in the summer gale,
Resumes its posture of repose,
When the rude breeze no longer blows,
She sunk in slumber, calm and sweet :
But oft a smile would ling’ring play
Around its lovely native seat,

Then fondly, gently, fade away,
 To live again as bright and fair
 As sunbeams in the balmy air;
 Then oft she'd partly breathe his name,
 And as the silv'ry murmur came,
 Like one low note of harmony,
 It was in sweetness born to die.

She slept—her ancient servitor
 Breath'd as she watch'd a fervent prayer,
 Nor through the night her eyes she closed
 The while her mistress fair reposed;
 And gilded morn for hours had broke
 Ere Gertrude from her sleep awoke.
 She woke to life, but mental peace
 Blest not her soul with happiness;
 As waits a victim for his doom,
 With aching heart and brow of gloom,
 So she look'd forward to the hour
 When she perchance unto the power
 Of tyranny must yield or die.
 Those train'd in bland philosophy
 May calmly, even scornfully,
 With heart and look unmoved, await
 The last and stern decree of fate:
 So may the martyr at the stake
 Regard the moment which shall break
 The feeble, oft the worthless tie,
 Which binds him to mortality;

Nor dreads the soldier death, as he
Advances on the enemy.
The first of these are taught to quell
Those feelings which in mortals dwell,
Or are implanted—that we may
Wisely their impulses obey,
And through them taste in purity
Earth's sweetest, best felicity:
Taught falsely, those who never prove
The burning ecstasy of love.
The passive martyr nobler far,
More true the victim sad of war ;
For passion, though of varied hues,
In either bosom does infuse
Its nerving vigour, though it be
Named love of truth or liberty,
Or any other sounding name,
Whose victims die the death of fame.

As to the flower the bright sunbeam,
As to the swan the rippling stream,
As to the bark the billow's crest,
So unto woman's faithful breast
Is her loved one; and dark must be
The hour which threatens to divide,
And bids them from their bonds be free,
And tears her lover from her side.
Blot out from midnight's sombre garb
The glittering gems which deck her robe,

Or from the mantle of the day
Exclude the sunbeam's glowing ray,
And bid them be as fair and gay
Ere change had swept across the scene,
And dimm'd their former lovely mien;
As well bid woman smiling greet
The hour which seals her lover's doom,
When two fond hearts shall cease to beat,
Giving two victims to the tomb.

There is a step upon the stair—
With a determined, gloomy air,
De Lacy enters; on his brow

His fixed resolve the eye could read,
Which might not either bend, or bow,
Where love in vain might intercede.

“ Daughter, we wait thee in the hall,
To crown the marriage festival.”

“ Father !” “ Nay, speak not; I have sworn—
Think'st thou myself I will suborn ?

This tower shall melt beneath my feet,
Yon hill shall quit its native seat,
And heav'nward cleave the ambient air,
Ere I regard thy foolish prayer.

There is in ev'ry human breast

Some darling wish which hope inspires;
Be it, or be it not confess'd,

It is the beacon of the fires
Which animate the soul, the aim
Of life, the polar star—its name,

Varied in ev'ry mind, but still
Its image doth the fancy fill :
Though to the mass it is denied
To know this "life-wish" gratified,
Yet some aspiring spirits rise,
And boldly win their long'd-for prize.
My heart has been ambition's shrine—
When thou art wedded, all is mine—
Now, daughter, art thou satisfied ?
Thou must, thou shalt then be his bride !
Give me thy hand." The gentle maid,
Without a sigh or tear, obeyed ;
He led her down the turret stair,
As victims to the theatre
In ancient days of Rome were led,
When thousands bravely fought and bled,
Though fought in vain, foredoom'd to die
Victims of brutal cruelty.

The ancient hall Hugh Fitzhurse paced
With anxious step, as if in haste—
Anon, he'd pause and listen, then
He would resume his march again.
Some three score years he might have seen,
Of middle height, with brutal mein ;
His features livid, sallow, coarse,
Where ev'ry vice with spring-tide force
Had left its index graven there,
In characters both plain and clear,

As on the beach the sea-weeds tell
How far has reach'd the billows' swell.
His hair was gray, his sunken eye
Glared as he spoke with villany;
Though years had dimm'd their youthful fire,
Yet could excitement still inspire
The same sarcastic fiendish look
Which no impediment will brook,
Nor shrink at any damning sin,
If it may aid his end to win.

The turret door now open'd wide—
“Ah! comes,” he mutter'd, “my fair bride.”
They enter—with a meaning glance,
De Lacy bids his friend advance.
Then to his daughter—“Welcome here
Thy husband, and an English peer.”
She may have heard her sire's command,
Yet raised not eye, nor proffered hand,
But motionless stood still, till he
Approach'd to greet her lovingly.
Then sprang she from his touch defiling,
As from an adder in the brake,
If aught that maiden's mute reviling
Some touch of shame might well awake.
Then turning, as a burning blush
Doth o'er her face and bosom rush,
And thus she spake, while flash'd her eye
With gall'd and wounded dignity :

“Have I not then a kinsman near,
That thou should'st dare insult me *here*?
Proffer to me the foul disgrace
To be enclasp'd in thy embrace?
I am my father's child in part,
His nerve is mine, without his heart—
What would'st thou then? why yonder priest?
They seldom grace our evening feast;
And now, like those foul birds of prey,
When night has triumph'd o'er the day,
Wing their lone flight amid the gloom,
He darkly lingers in the room.”
“He lingers, Gertrude,” Fitzhurse said,
“To change into a wife a maid;
To give to me the right to claim
Thee by the most endearing name,
When thou shalt start not when thou'rt pressed
Unto thy faithful husband's breast.”

The flush had left her oval cheek,
She faltered as she tried to speak,
Then with an effort she replied
Firmly—“Fitzhurse, thou art denied.”
“Pause, Ladye, ere you scorn me; let
Not thy wild, fever'd mind forget
All that with which I thee can bless,
E'en every earthly happiness;
For station, riches, power are mine,
And, Ladye, these shall all be thine.”

“I cannot pledge my hand to thee,
But I should give my heart the lie;
For love is not a thing so free,
That lands can claim it, wealth can buy :
'Tis chainless as the billow's crest,
'Tis subtile as a ray of light ;
Spontaneous springs it from the breast,
And wings its all uncertain flight
Where airy fancy only guides,
And its behest alone abides.
Thou wouldst not claim my form alone,
And have me as a slave to own ?
Then leave me ; for I cannot be
More than e'en now I am to thee.”

“Ladye, thou yet hast urged no plea
Against my suit : unwillingly
At first I deemed thou wouldst regard
Me as thy destined future lord :
For this I was prepared, and well
Have pondered the result. Rebel
No longer—do not hesitate,
Dearest, to link with mine thy fate.
'Twill be my happiness to prove
That I can dearly, fondly love ;
And I will teach thee to return
That passion with which now I burn.”

She shudder'd with disgust, while stole
A sick'ning horror o'er her soul.

“He dare to love me . . . I his wife . . .
How preferable death, than life
On such conditions! . . . No help yet . . .
Owain, dost thou the hour forget?
I hate to speak, and still must parley—
Life—oh, more than life—is in delay! . . .
Dost thou esteem me still a child,
By sophistry to be beguiled?
I’ve said my love cannot be thine,
Neither myself will I resign
To be thy puppet, mistress, slave . . .
More welcome far the silent grave,
Or any other fate, than be
For ever bound in misery.
The eagle never woos the dove,
Or kite the songstress of the grove,
Nor eld with summer mingles ever;
What nature has designed to sever
Man may not join with bless’d success,
Or hope, or dream of happiness.
Hast thou, upon a ridge of hills,
E’er mark’d how spring the mountain rills
On either side, though in their birth
They rise contiguous from the earth?
Yet ev’ry stone o’er which they roll
Leads them unto a distant goal:
So let our fates—so must they be . . .
Our’s is no common destiny.”

“Ladye, I grant your simile;
’Tis mine to read its point to thee.”

While thus he spoke his dark eyes fired,
As if a fiend his breast inspired
With fell malevolence to rend
A gentle heart, and break or bend
A noble soul. "In by-gone times
I've roam'd through distant summer climes,
Where blood is in the bright sun heated,
Where passion is the deepest seated,
Where mortals scorn all obstacles
Which thwart or baffle their wild wills,
And Nature has a fickle mood,
And Passion seems to stir her blood—
There I have known high hills o'erthrown,
Fair, smiling valleys cleft in twain,
And rocks, in masses thund'ring down,
In ruins strew the verdant plain;
And rival rivers blend their floods,
Together rushing through the woods.
Now, mark, I am the earthquake . . . I
Will change thy fancied destiny—
Uproot the rocks which interpose,
Till our two streams as one stream flows.
Thy hand is pledged, if not by thee,
I care not . . . it is one to me.
My will has never been denied,
And, Gertrude, thou shalt be my bride!"

With lips apart, she listened . . . all
Was silent, save upon the wall

The measured tread of sentinel;
Monotonously slow it fell,
With heavy sound, upon her ear,
And quench'd the hope of rescue near.
Hark! hark! what sounds are these? Alas!
The echoes on the night wind pass:
'Tis only, from the black morass,
The lonely bittern's booming note,
Which mournfully above doth float.
The air is thick; the torches flare
With yellow and uncertain glare;
The clouds upon the battlements
Are piled in gloomy masses dense,
Through arrow-slits and stone casements
They darkly flit, and fill each room
With sombre and unnatural gloom.
Anon the summer lightning glances,
And o'er the black horizon dances:
Now here, now there, the dark concave
Is lit up as it flits along,
Quicker than thought; but, like a grave
Or mausoleum, when among
Its subterranean arches light
Is borne, appears the earth: the night
A sad, sepulchral aspect wears,
As if it mourn'd the death of years.

No sound of rescue . . . "Owain, speed!
I feel my heart doth inly bleed;

Haste, or it will be drain'd—drain'd dry—
And death will prove my truth to thee.”
“Ladye, we wait,” Hugh Fitzhurse said;
Again awoke the trembling maid
To sue for mercy: “Help, oh, Heav’n!
Ere to despair my soul be driven,
Soften their hearts!” To Fitzhurse then:
“’Tis said that, in the worst of men,
A chord of feeling can be struck—
A ray of pity be awoke—
Art thou, then, viler than the worst,
In this, from all thy race divorced,
That thou canst not extend to me
(I will not think so) clemency?
Thou hadst a mother; on her breast,
When weakest, tend’rest, thou didst rest:
When men would pass thee heedless by,
She nursed thee, loved thee tenderly;
When helpless, it was woman shielded,
’Twas woman’s arms fond shelter yielded,
’Twas woman sooth’d thy hours of pain,
And smiled when health return’d again;
Thy childhood’s moments of distress,
’Twas woman cheer’d with tenderness:
Then let her memory plead for me—
A woman sues for clemency.
I’m doubly at thy mercy now,
A helpless orphan, motherless,
Whose father bends an angry brow,
My heart o’erpower’d with heaviness;

Be gen'rous, and thy suit forego,
And then, whene'er the knee I bow,
Thy name shall mingle with my theme,
As I address the All Supreme;
And, oh, believe me! thou wilt feel
It is delightful to do well.
The thought thou hast a boon conferr'd,
Thus blessing when thou almost err'd,
Will cheer thee more than hadst thou won
A thousand vict'ries o'er thy foes:
'Twill shine among thy deeds—a sun—
Its rays will bless thy last repose!"

If she had murmur'd to a stone,
It might have answered with a groan;
If she unto the gale had sighed,
Perchance the zephyrs had replied:
For there was in her soft appeal
That which might melt a heart of steel;
But her stern auditors were deaf
To pity, and her helpless grief
Moved no compassion; they listened,
But in scorn their dark eyes glistened.
Hugh Fitzhurse answered, "Ladye, thy
Suit can never influence me;
Nor hope that thou canst change thy sire,
If such, in truth, be thy desire.
Why dost thou yet prolong this strife?...
Gertrude, yes, thou shalt be my wife!"

“Friar, draw near!” The priest obeyed.
“Here lingers a reluctant maid,
Not all unwilling, but who would,
Doubtless impell’d by some strange mood,
Delay the hour which weaves the ties
That firmly bind our destinies;
Her sire consents to make her mine,
The only office, then, is thine:
Proceed, and make us one for ever,
Till death alone our fate doth sever.”

With arms upon her bosom cross’d,
Backward her fine head slightly toss’d,
But as a statue motionless,
Without a symptom of distress,
Except that her dilated eye
Shone with unnatural brilliancy,
And ev’ry tinted hue of red
From bosom, neck, and cheek had fled;
She seem’d a spirit whom from heaven
To visit earth again ’twas given,
And speeding on her distant way,
Charm’d by the cool and beaming ray,
Had, where the starlight’s fountains spring,
Lingered to rest her weary wing,
And in their ambient crystal wave,
Had paused her lovely form to lave,
And which with fairy power had given
An air ’bove earth, yet hardly heav’n,

That she might seem to Fancy's sight
A pure, embodied ray of light :
To outward eye though calm and cool,
Not so in truth her burning soul ;
Passion was there, in wildest mood,
And horror almost chill'd her blood ;
Restrain'd by scorn and noble pride,
All show of feeling she defied,
Until, in stern determined strain,
She broke the silence once again :

“Dost think thy will has power to bind
In fetter's chain the mighty wind?
Or that the waves, when they are wroth,
That thou canst still them with an oath?
And woman's will dost thou esteem
As feeble as a taper's beam,
Which e'en a hand outstretch'd may hide,
And its direction sternly guide?
If this thy faith, abjure it now,
And woman's will then justly know.
Know it is like the wave-bound rock,
Which scorns the tempest's wildest shock,
When passion rages ever firm,
And it defies the mental storm.
But it is like the young vine tree,
When love would train it tenderly,
Gladly submitting to the spell
Which wisely would direct it well.

Then, dost thou dream I'll speak that vow,
Which would destroy all peace below,
And sacrifice my future fate,
To be the thing my soul doth hate?
Thinkst thou to drive me to forswear
The love I to another bear?
Compel me, at thy fierce command,
To forfeit unto *thee* my hand?
Then wert thou e'en that prince of sin,
Once higher than the seraphin,
I would with scorn thy power defy,
And laugh at thy malignity.
I'd rather bite my tongue in twain,
And would not feel the smarting pain,
But smiling feel 'twere bliss to know
Thou couldst not make me speak that vow.
Where is thy triumph, tyrant? Where
Thy victory? Thou may'st glare
With disappointed rage and hate,
Which it perchance may aggravate
To know, that there is one—yes, one
For whom I live and breathe alone;
That I am pledged to be his bride,
And e'er the morrow's eventide,
If life be our's, the nuptial tie
Shall crown our long fidelity."

"False minion!" dark Fitzhurse replied,
"Thou ne'er shalt be another's bride;

Though all the powers of hell combine,
Body and soul thou shalt be mine!"
With quickened steps, the wretch advanced—
High in the air her dagger glanced,
But ere it reach'd that bosom fair,
Her eyeballs roll'd with fearful glare,
And senseless sank she on the floor—
Her o'erwrought frame could bear no more.

The sire and suitor stood aghast . . .
Hush! has her noble spirit pass'd?
Has she resisted until death?
They listened, but they heard no breath,
On her white lips a light froth stood,
'Twas tinted, and the hue was blood;
They wiped away its crimson stain—
Twice, thrice, the red foam rose again,
And then subsided, still she lay
All motionless—in thick array
The cold dews stood upon her brow.
Hush, hush! life is returning now;
Long hath it lingered loth to part,
Her bosom heaves, and throbs her heart;
Yet it was but existence,
Cold, apathetic was each sense:
Her lips moved not, and her eyelids were closed,
Neither in death nor life her form reposed;
Like summer twilight when the sky is dun,
The day not ended, nor the night begun;

Her spirit seem'd on outstretched wing,
Uncertain or to stay, or spring
On its long flight, to heaven's rest;
As the bird hovers o'er the nest

Where the rude spoiler's hand has been,
The evidence he faintly hath impress'd,

Doth not escape her vision keen;
And troubled fears are wakened, though she
may
Sleep once more lightly on her chosen spray.

Hark! through the gallery they hear
The sound of footsteps hurrying near;
The hall is won—Glawdys appears,
With all the strength of earlier years,
Within her withered arms she bears

A muffled form—with accents hoarse,
“Behold!” she cried, “one victim more!”

Thy wife, De Lacy, now a corse.”
Then laid it by the child she bore.
“My wife?” “Wouldst thou the claim deny,
And brand the dead with infamy?
Yes, thine—but who destroyed her? thou
Didst not slay her! full well I know
The cord or knife were not employed,
Or bowl—but yet she was destroyed.
These, these were manly, to the arts
Which thou didst use, for loving hearts
Would rather break and cease to be,
Than as they live each day to die.

Neglect, injustice, cruelty,
Assumed suspicion, thou didst try,
Oh, God ! but too successfully.
As drops of water, one by one,
For ever falling wear the stone ;
Thus thou didst sap her spotless mind,
With suffering the most refined,
Because the most prolonged : 'twas done,

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And when her intellect gave way,
Thy victory was partly won ;

But yet within thy path there lay
An obstacle—while she remained
Thy evil ends could not be gain'd.
'Tis finish'd—how, thou knowest best,
Loathsome confinement was the least.”

“ And this is Nesta's curse fulfill'd,
Alas, too well ! though my heart will'd
The mother's death, the shaft too wild
Was shot, its barb has pierced her child.
How have my high-built hopes been foil'd !
The blow, upon myself recoil'd,
Strikes deep—'tis mockery to mourn,
My scalding tears the dead would scorn ;
The very stones would taunting rise,
And echo would the sounds despise.
But still I cannot gaze unmoved
On those whom once *I* even loved ;
Nor does my bosom feel the less,
To know I marr'd their happiness.

Ambition ! curse thee ! Like the lore,
The Magi taught in days of yore,
Which no aspirant could attain,
Without his best beloved were slain—
So have I offered at thy shrine,

With callous and unwavering faith,
With stern, unpitying, fell design,

That which I valued most beneath,
And vainly offered, for no wreath
Of victory awaits to crown
The deeds which I would fain disown.
To steep the soul in blackest guilt,
To dye with blood the faulchion's hilt,
And thus the victory to win,

Is e'en to be at quits with sin.

But I have sacrificed to gain

Naught but the soul-condemning stain,
And ranc'rous thoughts remorse to feed,
Which bids my bosom curse the deed.

“Pale skeleton ! oh, couldst thou wake,
And those dark bonds I fashion'd break,
And on my head relentless heap
Thy malediction, loud, and deep,
It would be sweeter far to me,
Than the most perfect melody.

But those drawn lips, apart in vain,

Speak with the thunder of the spheres,
And echo on my heart and brain,

As though I had a thousand ears.

Oh ! could those eyelids hide beneath,
Her sightless orbs now glazed in death,
Which still methinks return my gaze,
Through the dark veil they cannot raise,
With mute reproach, and yet they wear,
An aspect harder still to bear ;
It seems to me, as they would calm
My breast with pity's gentle balm.
Oh ! hide that face with hunger worn,
Which will not curse me in return ;
But with its look of peace, and rest,
Stirs a volcano in my breast.

“ But who dares trespass on my woe ?

What means yon tumult on the wall ?

Who comes, or be he friend, or foe,

Shall rue his entrance in my hall.”

He started, for the uproar rose,

It was the clash when warriors close ;

A moment longer, through the door,

A stream of combatants in pour.

“ Monster, we meet !” dark Tewdwr cried,

’Twas he, with blood his sword was dyed.

Behind, Llewelyn doth appear,

Owain, and Griffith too, were near,

With many a sturdy mountaineer.

De Lacy trembled, ’twas not fear,

Nor sight of foeman’s bloody spear ;

That voice, as though the dead had spoken,

And from their mighty chains had broken,

Stern retribution to demand,
At his, the guilty tyrant's hand,
Could not, save it his frame had riven,
A greater shock and dread have given.

“ We meet—we meet, we meet at last,
Sternly to reckon for the past ;
But death is far too poor revenge,
It will not half my wrongs avenge ;
Though poor, 'tis all now left to me,
T'atone for thy enormity.
Draw, coward, draw !”—the Knight obeyed—
Feebly at first his sword he swayed,
But when his foeman's blade drew blood,
It waked life's self-preserving mood ;
He fought, and bravely fought—but few
Who cross'd De Lacy did not rue
His wond'rous skill, and giant might,
So oft victorious in the fight ;
But he who cross'd his blade, was now
More than an ordinary foe:
Though versed in every feint and ward,
With which the skilful wield the sword,
Though valour, strength, were all combined,
Yet these in many he might find.
It was the glance from his dark eye,
The air which foretells victory,
Which seems to say, “ Yes, thou shalt die.”
'Twas this he feared, 'twas this which spoke,
And in his heart an echo woke ;

He felt his final hour had come,
The mem'ry of the past struck home,
For conscience gilds the righteous cause,
And nerves the blade the patriot draws,
But blunts at last the tyrant's steel,
In hour of triumph damps his zeal.
Again dark Tewdwr's blade was dyed,
The life-blood stain'd De Lacy's side ;
He glared with fury, but in vain,
His rage will not his strength regain ;
His eye becomes less true, his hand
Will not obey his mind's command ;
Less sure his guard, more faint each blow,
While stronger, fiercer grew his foe ;
He staggers, reels, his powers fail,
Too weak is now his glitt'ring mail ;
Pierced through and through, he falls, 'tis o'er,
His life-stream gushing stains the floor.

Dark Tewdwr gazed upon his foe,
Without the power to strike a blow ;
He watch'd his life-blood ebbing fast,
And breathed, " I am revenged at last !
But I had dreamed revenge would be
Far sweeter, dearer still to me :
Methought 'twould have afforded pleasure,
And joy, and gladness without measure ;
That I should fondly watch each throb,
And count each ling'ring, suff'ring sob,

Only to grieve when he should die,
I could not stretch his agony.
But now revulsion wakes in vain,
The wish almost, he were not slain,
That I to him could life restore,
Bid him repent and sin no more."

His dying head De Lacy raised,
On his stern foeman wildly gazed,
Then moved his lips, his words were none,
The power of speech at first seem'd gone,
Then feebly uttered, "I confess
My death is just, thy happiness
I foully marr'd." "Wouldst thou a priest,"
Dark Tewdwr said, "to ease thy breast?"
"No, no," he mutter'd; "I will die
As I have lived, right fearlessly.
I never quail'd but once—'twas now,
When on thy stern avenging brow
I read my doom—the first, the last
Time I shall falter, it is past;
I have no hope, or fear, as I
Bid farewell to mortality.
I wait thee, death!" fell back his head,
Thus Hugh De Lacy's spirit fled.

There's one within that bloody hall,
Who has not mark'd its owner fall,
Who hears no sound, who sees no foe,
But wildly bends with speechless woe

O'er Gertrude's form. "It cannot be,
She is for ever lost to me."

He raised her in his arms, and bare
Her up the winding turret stair,
Unto the room where late they sware
Their oaths of fond fidelity.

"My beauteous bride she yet may be,
Avaunt, despair! she lives—she breathes,
Though gently, yet her bosom heaves."
But from that still repose, so deep,
That senseless, dull, lethargic sleep
She started not, or eyelid moved:
Still hung he o'er the form he loved,
With burning look and throbbing brain,
Then press'd her to his heart again,
For pillow'd on his aching breast,
Her all unconscious form doth rest.

Who dares that noble creed denounce?
We never truly love but once,
Though passion may the soul inspire
Oft and again, but that pure fire
Once wakened, when once truly known,
And quench'd, it is for ever flown.
Not like the phoenix which decays,
From its dead dust a child to raise;
Not like the forest leaves which perish,
Another verdant birth to cherish;
Not like the streams, which shrink to rise,
And fill their fountains from the skies;

Not like the breeze, which dies to sweep
With tempest fury o'er the deep.
But love renewed, is like the oak
Half shivered with the thunder-stroke,
From whose torn trunk, a few poor leaves
Are ever trembling in the breeze,
And almost speak their mute distress,
As if they mourn'd their nakedness.
Or it is like the polish'd gem,
Which glistens in a diadem ;
If chance should sever it in twain,
No power may join the parts again.
Or it is like the human eye,
If aught has dimm'd its brilliancy ;
None can restore the piercing gaze,
Which erst it knew in former days.

Speaks this to some poor heart bereaved,
Who o'er its first pure love hath grieved ;
Then speaks it not to soothe and cheer,
Or bid it dry the starting tear.
No, let it fall, it ne'er shall know,
Such holy ecstacy below ;
Mourn it a gem of priceless cost,
And mourn it—yes, for ever lost.
When parted, it is past for ever,
To wake in brightness never, never ;
It sleeps, a veil its light doth cover,
Shade o'er its radiance hangeth over,

And vainly may the bosom mourn,
This soul-felt love will not return.
While forms can please, while words can charm,
The period of the passion's storm
Is like its brother of the sky,
Soft, gentle in its infancy.
Drop, drop by drop, on leaf and flower,
Linger the first fruits of the shower ;
Then faster, till in streams it pours,
'Mid the dark forest green it roars ;
Then when its mightiest power has burst,
Does it subside, and as at first,
Drop, drop by drop, until it dies,
No more to sweep across the skies ;
When in its zenith, mightiest then,
Never to be as deep again ;
Love that succeeds, is but in name,
A poor reflection of its flame—
At best, a temple rear'd again
From its crush'd heaps, which strewed the plain.

Owain hung o'er her, drank her breath,
Drove from his heart all thought of death,
Cheating the rising fears in vain,
Which rush'd across his fevered brain.
“ Oh ! she must live, she cannot die,
This is some fearful phantasie ;
And life and happiness will yet
Bid us this frenzied hour forget.”

Now move her lips, her eyes uncloze;
But not as waking from repose
Was her wild glance—the eyeballs roll'd
With fear, or passion uncontroll'd;
Then burst these words, “I live for one,
For Owain—yes, for him alone!”
But when he answered, “It is I,”
She murmur'd forth no sweet reply;
Again she sank in lethargy,
And lingered thus while hours swept by.
Once more her eyes uncloze, and now
The light of reason gilds her brow,
But all her powers of speech were gone,
The loving glance, the glance alone,
Reveal'd to Owain he was known. }
'Tis o'er, the final struggle's past,
His soul received that sigh—her last.
Still he her lifeless form retains,
Nor hears the roar which round him reigns;
He does not see the flame which leaps,
And watch upon the casement keeps,
Nor heeds the smoke, which through the door,
In eddying wreaths doth thickly pour.
Burst from his lips no groan or sigh,
Nor rolled a tear-drop from his eye;
His cheek was white as chisell'd stone,
His glance was bent on her alone,
As though he'd search her bosom's core,
To learn if life was really o'er,

Or if that vital principle,
Within was gently slumb'ring still.
Silent was all—and death was there,
 The dark usurper of that throne,
Where late he reigned without a peer,
 Her heart his empire, his alone.
Still fair, alas, but fleeting fair,
 Like all earth's loveliest, holiest hours,
As swift dissolving they, as rare,
From mem'ry wash'd by grief in showers.
The lovely ruin of a shrine,
 The severed rose but cropped to die,
That form was now which did recline,
 Like the bent flower, languidly.
To which the fleeting soul had giv'n
 A smile so wreathed in happiness,
Which seemed to say, I wait in heaven,
 To greet thee with a long caress.
But the icy chill had reached his heart,
 And his once bright eyes were glazed and dim,
That last fixed look could not impart
 A ray of comfort unto him:
Their mutual air like sculpture seemed
 Alike unmoved, and all unmoving,
As sculptured passion ever streamed,
 From chisell'd hating, writhing, loving,
For change had passed the lovers by,
Their last look was to love—then die.—
The fortress quivers, all is o'er,
A fearful crash, a deaf'ning roar,

Burst from the Welsh an awful yell,
And thus the towers of Diserth fell.

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Round Ramsey's isle the currents roar,
And foam against its craggy shore,
And when the winter's storm howls by,
The breakers flout the leaden sky,
Dash o'er its rocks, and in its caves
Seethe the infuriate swelling waves ;
Woe to the bark within their power,
Short is the seaman's parting hour,
For few are they who live to tell,
How they swam through the crested swell.
When sweeps o'er Ramsey's isle the storm,
There's seen a lonely human form ;
Upon the cliff's dark edge he kneels,
To heav'n's high throne the monk appeals
For mercy, that the gale might cease,
And the wild waters be at peace ;
And ever on the midnight air,
Is borne his humble, fervent prayer ;
And with the breezes as they pass,
Mingles the lonely friar's mass.
His history unknown, 'twas said,
A warrior's life he erst had led ;
Some whispered that a fearful crime
Had darkly stained his manhood's prime ;
Others said a dark tragedy
Had steep'd his life in misery ;

That he had seen his children die,
Was wronged by woman's frailty.
These, and a thousand tales were told,
But all in mystery enroll'd,
Defied the curiosity
Of those who in his fate would pry ;
Strictly devout, he rarely spoke,
The first he silence never broke,
But calm, and gentle, heart subdued,
With pure religion soul imbued,
He linger'd out a few short years,
Then sank into the vale of tears.
On peak of Ramsey's tow'ring choir,
It was his last express'd desire
His frame should rest : they laid him there,
Piled a rude cross with pious care,
Where the wild sea birds sing his dirge,
Mingled with the resounding surge ;
No monument above him built,
Sleep the remains of Tewdwr Wylt.

My humble minstrel strain is sung,
Feebly the dying notes have rung ;
Yet ere they cease, my harp should tell,
How Powys to his Prince did kneel,
And how Llewelyn, great and brave,
Nobly the erring chief forgave.
Also, that Griffith's rightful heir,
In time his father's rank did bear ;

Who would learn more, to hist'ry's page,
Records the deeds of ev'ry age ;
There all may read who bled, and fought,
How dearly Cambria's doom was bought ;
When freedom with a groan expired,
Where for succeeding centuries
That magic name each bosom fired,
And swelled aloft on ev'ry breeze.
The struggle's past, and past for ever,
The Severn is no bounding flood
The Saxon and the Celt to sever,
Who fiercely sought each other's blood.
And now these ling'ring strains of mine,
Are but faint echoes of the themes
Which once rung from those lyres divine,
That minstrels woke—and as the beams
Of Luna are to Phœbus' rays,
Cold, spiritless, such are my lays.
Farewell, farewell my harp and song,
Ye who have cheered my lonely hours,
My happiest moments all belong
To those soothed by your magic powers :
Roving 'mid those ideal scenes
Where sterner life is all excluded,
And trouble never intervenes,
The mind in fancy's realms secluded.
If I should never wake again
Your echoing notes, my treasured lyre,
Ne'er breathe another minstrel strain,
With this my trembling muse expire.

Then one long, last, and sad farewell,
The tear is glancing in mine eye,
My heart with fond emotions swell,
My lips are quivering with a sigh.



NOTES.

CANTO THE FIRST.

Page 1. "The pine knots blazed in Powys Hall."

Powys Castle, or as it was formerly called Poole Castle, is situated in Montgomeryshire, in the immediate vicinity of the town of Welshpool. It is supposed to have been founded in 1110, by a renowned Briton, Cadwgan ap Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, who was slain by his nephew Madoc, ere its completion. The building was continued by Gwenwynwyn, who, in 1191, surrendered it to Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the most honourable terms, but soon retook it, at which time it received the name of the Castle of Gwenwynwyn at the Pool. When in the possession of his son Griffith (the same mentioned in the poem), it was overthrown in 1233 by Llewelyn ap Jorwerth, but Owain, Griffith's son, again obtained it. He left a daughter called Hawys Gadarn, or Hawys the Hardy; she wisely made a friend of Edward II., and married John De Charlton: in their posterity it continued several generations. The barony and title were afterwards conveyed to Sir John Grey of Northumberland, by his marriage with Jane, eldest daughter of Edward Lord Powys. It remained in their descendants till the reign of Henry VIII., when the title became extinct by the death of Edward Grey. It afterwards came into the possession of Sir William Herbert, second son of the Earl of Pembroke, who obtained it by purchase in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He was created Lord Powys, and was ancestor to the Marquesses of Powys.—*Pennant's Tours*.

Page 2. "Griffith ap Gwenwynwyn," &c.

The first historical notice which I meet with of this Prince, or Lord of Powys, is as above stated, in 1233, when his castle was overthrown by Llewelyn ap Jorworth. I next find him, according to Woodward's History of Wales, in 1240, when his name is mentioned in the agreement between Henry III. and Davydd, Prince of Wales, concerning the lands, which he, with other of the king's barons, claimed at the hands of Davydd. He appears at various intervals as a partisan of the English, until in 1257 he fled before Llewelyn, Prince of Wales, into England, this prince having ravaged his lands, and burned his castle; he, however, soon appeared in arms against his vanquisher, accompanied by John Le Strange, with other barons of England, and the banners of Prince Edward; they encamped on the Severn near Montgomery, but turned and fled at the furious onset of the Welch. In the beginning of 1263, Henry III. wrote to Griffith ap Gwenwynwyn, Lord of Powys, to advance against Llewelyn, but in August of the same year, he did homage on bended knee to the Prince of Wales, agreeing to hold his lands as liegeman of the prince; then joining their forces, they attacked the Castle of Wyrdd-gryg (called by some Mold), captured it, and razed it to the ground. Up to about 1275, we find Griffith a partisan of the Welch, but in the beginning of the above-mentioned year, he conspired to slay Llewelyn, and fled to Henry's court, where he was graciously received. In 1281, Woodward mentions the name of this turbulent chief for the last time, when the disputes about certain lands between him and the Prince of Wales formed one of the many causes of contention between Henry and Llewelyn. As no farther mention occurs of him, we may fairly conclude that about this period he found that rest in the grave which he never appears to have experienced during a long life. It needs little skill, and it affords less pleasure, to sum up the character of this chieftain; all his actions appear to have been entirely regulated by self-interest. Now the sworn enemy of his country, anon pledged to sustain its cause, then a base intriguer with Davydd, brother of Llewelyn, to slay his sovereign; failing this vile attempt, he again becomes a partisan of the English,

and when Wales most wanted friends, he dies, in league against her.

At this period of time it is perhaps difficult to know what political aspirations, and what peculiar circumstances influenced men's minds; but we may safely determine that the nobler feelings of disinterested patriotism had as little weight then as now, and perhaps it is not arrogating too much to ourselves to say, that in the present time, purer motives, at any rate less culpable ambition, are the secret springs of action.

Page 9. "Fill the deep Hirlas Horn!" &c.

The Hirlas Horn was a large bugle, or horn of an ox, enriched with sculptured silver, and with a chain of the same metal. On jovial occasions, the horn was emptied at one tip, and then blown, to show there was no deceit; it was, moreover, a subject of poetry. Owen Cyfeiliog, Prince of Powys, in 1160, celebrates the Hirlas, or Drinking Horn, used at feasts in his palace, in a very exalted strain.—*Pennant*.

Page 10. "The fall of Bauzan."

On the 5th of February, 1257, Stephen Bauzan, Nicholas Lord of Kemeys, Patrick Lord of Kidweli and Carew, with many armed knights, broke open the gates of the famous abbey of Ty Gwyn, "and there did great despite to God and all the saints," &c. Llewelyn, however, soon took complete vengeance, for in the end of the same month, he hastened with a great army to the scene of the sacrilege, and all the English portion of Kidweli, Carnwyllion, and Gower with Abertawy, he ravaged with fire and sword, and having brought into subjection to himself all the Cymry of those parts, he returned to Gwynedd before the end of March.

On the Tuesday after Pentecost, the 29th of May, Stephen Bauzan, with many other nobles, and a host of brave warriors, passed the night at Carmarthen. On the day following, the whole body with great audacity and pride, their mailed horses

and others being drawn out in order of battle, proceeded to lay waste and plunder the land of Ystrad Tywy, and advanced as far as Llandilo Vawr. The Welch of Cardigan and Ystrad Tywy, under the command of Meredydd ap ab Rhys Gryg, and Meredydd ab Owain, their anger being inflamed by the presence of Welchmen in the army of their enemies, assembled in the woods and defiles around them, and with loud shouts, and a ceaseless discharge of darts and arrows, harassed them the whole day through. On the 2nd of June, the guide of the English, Rhys ab Rhys Mechyl, with a few followers, secretly fled to his own Castle of Dinevwr. The English relying on their impenetrable mail, and scorning to be defeated by mere armed bush fighters, determined to force their way to Cardigan, and hoped to find refuge in the castle there. From the first hour of daylight on that Saturday, till noon, they bore up against the incessant attacks of the Welch, who poured on them from every bush and every rock, a ceaseless shower of missiles, and made their way through the marshy and entangled woods to their much desired fortress; but their horses fell beneath that death hail, and embarrassed with their provision and baggage, and yet more by that armour in which they had trusted, they fell before the hand-to-hand conflict in which their unwearied enemies now joined with them. The riders on the barbed battle chargers were hurled to the ground, and trodden to death beneath their horses' feet. The rout was frightful and complete: more than three thousand fell, scarcely one escaped. De Bauzan, who was "very dear" to the king, was amongst the slain, with many other men of mark. —*Woodward's History of Wales*. The only authority I have for introducing the names of Patrick and Carew is, that they are enumerated in the raid of February. History does not relate they fell with De Bauzan.

Page 24. "Down by the Vrnwy's rushing tide."

This river and the Tanat are tributaries of the Severn, into which river they fall near Melverley, after having before joined their floods near Llansantffraid in Montgomeryshire.

Milltir Gerrig, the "stony mile," is a black, heathy pass, over the Berwyn mountains into Merionethshire, on the Bala road.

Page 29. "On Cader Ferwyn."

Cader Ferwyn is one of the highest peaks of the Berwyn mountains, which form the south-east frontier of Denbighshire, the boundary line between it and Merionethshire running along the summit; but the highest peaks are in the latter county.

Page 30. "The Pistyll's Fall."

This cataract, situated on the river Rhaiaadr, is said to be the loftiest in Wales. The first fall is two hundred and forty feet, when it rushes under a rocky arch (where, according to Pennant, adventurous peasants sometimes stand for the amusement of the tourist), below which, there is another fall of seventy feet.

Page 34. "There sat within a spacious cave."

As I appear to have given a *locus in quo* to this cavern, it seems proper to state, its only existence is in this poem.

CANTO THE SECOND.

Page 59. "The Arrans," &c.

These lofty mountains are situated in Merionethshire, near to Dolgelly.

Page 68. "I chose St. David's holy shrine," &c.

In the extreme north-west corner of Pembrokeshire, hard by the restless ocean, is situated that which remains of this once stronghold of religion. The traveller, on first entering the city, cannot fail to be at once struck with its peculiarly clean and

interesting appearance; and if he should be sanitary commissioner, the effect must be overpowering to his mind, as he cannot fail to be reminded of the three associations, viz. : pigs, poverty, and pestilence. More than one sense proclaim the two former, and common sense suggests the latter. Descending by the Market Cross, he soon perceives the ruined gateway of the Close; this reached, then outspread beneath him is the old Cathedral, with the magnificent ruins of its bishop's palace, and college halls. On all sides sterile hills arise, their summits for the most part crowned with masses of gray stone. Not a tree to be seen, or even an osier bending over the rapid little river Alun, which wends its way between the venerable piles, emptying itself in St. Brides Bay, one mile and a half distant. To give an historical or archæological description of the place, would alone occupy a volume. Lo! are not these things written in the books of Basil Jones, Fenton, *cum multis aliis*? Suffice it then to say, St. David's was called by the Romans, Menevia, and by the Britons, Ty Ddewi; and it is generally allowed that St. Patrick had founded a religious establishment here prior to the birth of the patron saint of Wales, A.D. 460. It gradually increased in wealth, power, and reputation, until it became an archiepiscopal see, and received more than one royal pilgrimage; eventually neglect, and the rapacity of those whose pride it should have been to support it, caused it to fall into its present dilapidated state. Some fifteen or eighteen years ago, the condition of the noble pile was truly lamentable, and the surrounding college and palatial ruins were in a beastly state, but since the above date, much, very much has been done; pig-styes have been removed, gates to prevent the dilapidations of intruders erected, cleanliness restored, in the cathedral several new and handsome windows have been erected, walled-up arches opened, the whitewash which disfigured the beautiful carved stonework of the interior removed, the parish church, which blocked up partially the nave, transferred to the south transept, and new tessellated tiles laid down, so that, although much remains to do, the holy pile is no longer a disgrace to the bishopric.

Page 70. "Contention's strife," &c.

Whoever will take the trouble to make himself acquainted with this period of ecclesiastical history, will find these lines no libel on the majority of the professors of religion. The "three great vices" (as Geraldus calls them), of the Welch clergy, are concubinage (or, as we say, marriage); partnerships in livings, and the "enormous" succession of sons after fathers in church livings and sees, so that if any other than the son or sons of a parson received any benefice, disturbance and bloodshed were sure to follow.—*Vide Woodward's History of Wales.* This is no isolated passage, extracted at variance from the text, to prove the assertion in the poem—space will not permit a longer quotation; but if this work is not sufficient, let the reader, if he wishes to be convinced of the morality of the Roman Catholic Church, refer to *Jewel's Apology*, where he will read statements which will horrify the delicate mind.

Page 73.

"and read

Th' inscriptions o'er the silent dead."

The reader of Addison will instantly perceive the resemblance in some of the following passages to that writer's magnificent letter on Westminster Abbey. If it be plagiarism to put into rhyme his beautiful prose, then certainly I am open to condemnation.

Page 82. "Where'er the pasture to the herds."

I beg to acknowledge that for some of the arguments adduced in the following pages, I am indebted to *Young's Night Thoughts* on Life, Death, and Immortality.

CANTO THE THIRD.

Page 96. "Romaunt of the Wandering Knight."

There was formerly a tradition with the Cymry (and most implicitly believed by them), that the renowned Prince Arthur

was still wandering the earth, destined at a certain time to return, and restore the ancient British throne. So firm a hold had this on their minds, that the politic Edward, with his Queen Eleanor, caused certain bones (said by them to be Arthur's), to be exhumed, and reburied with great pomp at Glastonbury Abbey, hoping thereby ever to set the popular fiction at rest, which, however, never slept until Henry VII. (who was descended from the Welch Princes) ascended the throne.

Page 99. “'Tis Gwenhivir.”

This lady was the wife of Prince Arthur.

Page 116. “'Tis said, and 'tis by some believed,” &c.

According to the theosophy of the bards, the soul is pre-existent and immortal. All creation originates at the lowest point of existence, they say, and that is called Annwn; gradually it reaches humanity, each stage being less and less evil; the only exception, fishes, are not subject to this law, why, we are not told, nor can we imagine.—*Woodward's History of Wales*.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

Page 120. “The white mists from the rippling Clwyd.”

The Clwyd rises in a small hill lake in the south of Denbighshire, flows through Ruthin, St. Asaph, and Rhyddlan, emptying itself into the sea at Rhyl.

Page 123. “Mid way up Moel Famma's side.”

This mountain is one of the lofty peaks of the Clwydian Hills, 1,845 feet in height, and forms the western boundary of Flintshire.

Page 124. "The faithful warder of the cave."

According to Woodward, the story of the tribute of wolves' heads paid to King Edgar, thereby extirpating the animal from these islands, is partly erroneous, as in November 6, 1280, A.D., a licence was given to John Giffard of Brimmesfield (Brimfield, in Herefordshire), to hunt wolves; and an order to destroy all the wolves in the parks, &c., in Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Salop, and Staffordshire, issued on the 14th of May, 1281.

The cave alluded to, line 20, is an imaginary one.

Page 134. "Her curse on Hugh De Lacy poured."

It was an ancient superstition with the Welch to write names of the anathematized on a piece of parchment, and throw it with curses into a well, it being presumed that this formula would insure the fulfilment of the curse.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

Page 154. "On Aber's stream the sunbeams glow'd."

At the entrance of the glen close to the village of Aber, is a very large artificial mount, flat at the top. It was once the site of a castle belonging to Llewelyn the Great; the time of its destruction is unknown.

Page 156. "'Llewelyn' did not stand alone."

Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, on the death of Davydd, was chosen by the Welch chieftains to receive, jointly with his brother Owain, the dignity of the Principedom of North Wales, and accordingly the country was divided between them, and in the summer following they paid their homage to Henry III., consenting to hold their portion of the principality under him, &c. This state of

things continued until 1255 A.D., when Owain conspired with his brother Davydd, to deprive Llewelyn of his share of the dignity of the principality. A considerable army was raised on both sides, and they met at Bryn Derwyn, where in the space of an hour Owain was captured, and so many of his followers slain, that a total rout ensued, leaving Llewelyn master of the field. Davydd too was taken, and the rebellious brethren were imprisoned, from which Owain was not released for many a weary year.

The insults and injuries which the Welch suffered at the hands of the English becoming at last unbearable, on the 1st of November, 1256 A.D., they revolted, and Llewelyn was soon master of the country up to the gates of Chester, so that in the end of the year 1257, the historian says:—"The spirit of the king (Henry), was now greatly depressed, for the Welch everywhere triumphed, and the work of so many ages, upon which so many brave lives and such heaps of treasure had been expended, appeared irretrievably ruined." Hostilities continued with invariable success on the part of the Welsh, till 1258, when some writers say a truce was concluded. This, if ever made, was soon broken; but on the 26th of June of this year, a truce was again brought about till the 1st of August, 1259 A.D., which afforded to the patriot army the rest they so much needed. At the expiration of this date, another truce was concluded, followed by two others, all of which, at the convenience of either party, had been repeatedly broken, until, in 1263, we find Llewelyn in alliance with Griffith ap Gwenwynwyn, taking and razing to the ground the castles of Wyrdd-gryg, Diserth, and Diganwy, and then concluding a short truce with Henry. In 1264, we find him with the celebrated De Montfort, taking the castles of Hay and Ludlow, and ravaging Mortimer's lands. In 1265, he contracted a stricter alliance with De Montfort, who, as Llewelyn was now his chief dependance, contracted to give him his daughter Eleanor in marriage. After the battle of Evesham, both parties were anxious for peace, consequently a treaty was signed by the Welch Prince, at Montgomery, bearing date 25th of September, 1267 A.D.

Various grievances on the part of the English, caused Llewelyn to appear soon again in arms; however, several attempts were

made to settle the disputes peaceably, all of which, from various circumstances, proved ineffectual. In 1275, the Prince of Wales preferred a formal request to the French King and the Countess of Leicester, for the hand of her daughter (now residing in a convent in France), which had been promised him by her father. This was granted, and the young lady embarked, but owing to the treachery of a knight in her train, the little squadron was captured by Edward, 1276 A.D., off the Scilly Islands, and the fair Eleanor detained in honourable custody, and in attendance on the Queen. In 1277 A.D., Edward successfully invaded Wales, and concluded a peace on the 10th of November, and receiving the homage of Llewelyn on Christmas Day the same year, who, on the 13th of October, at Worcester, 1278 A.D., the King and Queen being present, espoused his long affianced bride, Eleanor De Montfort, and led her away with him to share the rude splendour of his court at Aber.

The peace between the two countries continued uninterrupted until the death of the Princess of Wales, which occurred in the summer of 1281 A.D., on giving birth to a daughter, who, after her father's fall, lived long years, and died in the convent of Sempringham. Among the numerous causes of strife between the two countries, one of the most fertile was, that according to the treaties, all disputes were to be settled by Welch laws, for offences committed in Wales; this was not always attended to, and the immediate consequence was a rupture, and an appeal to arms. The war was begun by Davydd (now an ally of his brother's), who, on the night of March the 22nd, 1282 A.D., surprised the castle of De Clifford, at Hawarden, and took the Baron prisoner: Llewelyn immediately joined him, and in concert with the Princes of North Wales, the Chieftains of South and West Wales rose at the same time. Edward was soon in arms to oppose the revolt, and in October, by the aid of the Cinque Ports fleet, Anglesey was subdued. The Archbishop of Canterbury now endeavoured to make peace, and for that purpose visited the Welch camp. His return being delayed, the English suspected treachery, and resolved to attack the entrenchments of the enemy, to rescue or revenge the prelate. Accordingly on the 6th of November, seven bannerets and three hundred men-at-

arms crossed the Menai Straits by their bridge of boats, but instead of at once commencing the attack, they wandered idly on the shore, until, with the returning tide, the end of their bridge either floated off or became too short, thereby cutting off retreat. The Welch seeing their predicament rushed down in numbers, and thirteen knights (many of whom were of note), seventeen pages, and about two hundred of their followers were slain or drowned, in their futile attempts to reach the bridge; Lord William Latimer alone is said to have swam to it, or across the strait, his horse being of great strength.

The archbishop now returned, his journey to Snowdon proving fruitless, and pronounced the sentence of excommunication on Llewelyn and his followers. A second time, and again in vain, the archbishop visited the Welch Prince, who now leaving his brother the charge of the Snowdon camp, in the month of December marched with a strong force southward, ravaged Cardigan-shire and the lands of Rhys ab Meredydd. Thence he went to Builth, and on December the 11th, having posted the main body of his followers on an eminence near the Wye, and stationed a guard at a bridge called Pont Orewyn, he left them, and went down unarmed, attended but by a single squire, to the valley beside the stream. Whilst he waited in concealment, the guard at the bridge was attacked, but vainly, however, by the English under Edmund Mortimer, and that John Giffard, who had licence given him to hunt wolves; but one Helias Walwyn directed Mortimer to a ford, which he with his followers crossed. Hearing the clamour, the Prince bade his attendant see if his men still held the bridge, and being informed that they did, he exclaimed, that he feared not all the English on the other side. The uproar increasing, and growing nearer, both Llewelyn and his esquire rushed out from their hiding-place, and seeing that the English had passed the river, and overpowered the guard at the bridge, they turned and fled towards the hills where the army was stationed. One of Mortimer's knights, Adam or Stephen De Francon, perceiving them, and regarding them as Welchmen merely, spurred his horse after them, and overtaking Llewelyn, thrust his lance through him, and returned to his companions, leaving the unfortunate Prince stretched in mortal agony upon the

ground. The Welch having no leader, after a short contest broke and fled, great numbers being slain. After the fray, Adam De Francton remembering the man whom he had slain, galloped to see if there was any booty to be obtained on his person; he was not quite dead, and some men-at-arms told him that he had asked for a priest. Looking at him closely, he recognised Llewelyn, and immediately decapitated him. The gory head was presented to Edward at Rhuddlan, thence sent to London, and eventually, after being crowned with ivy, or, as some say, a silver crown, it was borne on a lance by a horseman through Cheapside, and set up over the gateway of the Tower. On finding a white friar had sung mass to the Prince the morning of his death, the ban of excommunication was removed, and the body was placed in consecrated ground.

Thus fell Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Prince of Wales, on the 11th of December, 1288 A.D., a noble and brave man, who died in arms for the cause which he had been from infancy (in common with his countrymen), taught to believe sacred. That he was faultless no one can assert, but his errors may well be lost sight of, in contemplating the unwearying skill and energy with which he prolonged an unequal struggle against an overwhelming enemy.—Principally abridged from *Woodward's History of Wales*.

Page 165. "Speak to those monuments of trees."—*Vide Captain M'Clure's Despatches*.

Page 189. "At St. Nonita's holy shrine," &c.

Nonita was the mother of St. David. A small chapel dedicated to her once stood in the city named after her son, St. David's.

CANTO THE SIXTH.

Page 232. "For Owain," &c.

To the historical critic an apology is due for what he may be pleased to deem an unwarrantable stretch of the poetic license.

History does not mention that Griffith ap Gwenwynwyn had ever more than one son, who certainly was called Owain, therefore the hero of this tale is another "myth." The veritable Owain was a joint conspirator with Davydd to slay the Prince of Wales, having previously married his coadjutor's daughter, A.D. 1276; he afterwards lived many years, and dying, left a daughter mentioned in the note to Powys Castle.

Page 234. "And thus the towers of Diserth fell."

On a lofty rock in Flintshire, situated between the towns of Rhyddlan and Rhyl, are the remains of the Castle of Diserth. The origin of this fortress is unknown; it probably was Welch, and went by the name of Dincolyn, Castell y Ffailon, and Castell Gerri, and was the last of the British posts on the Clwydian hills. Henry III. fortified it in 1241, but in 1261 (according to Woodward, 1263), Llewelyn ap Gruffydd destroyed it. The castle occupied the summit of the rock, whose sides are *escarpés*, or cut steep to render the access more difficult. On one part, beneath the top, is a square outwork, with fosses cut in part through the solid limestone. The fragments of the castle show that its ruin was not effected by time; they lie in vast masses overthrown by mining, which was a common method of besieging very long before the use of gunpowder.—*Pennant's Tours*.

And this is all that history states: therefore, gentle reader, the persons of Diserth's lord, his friend, his daughter, and his wife, are creatures of the imagination only, and, as such, no responsibility rests with the author in disposing of them according to his fancy, viz.: so as to form an exaggerated tragedy. The materials for this poem were very slight; none but those who have endeavoured to make themselves acquainted with the scenes of those departed days, can know the difficulty that exists in finding historical characters and circumstances, suited to be weaved into a tale of imagination, without powerful reckoning on the aid of fancy. While the introduction, though it only be casually of a few substantial realities both of place and person, gives an air of seeming, which, in the writer's humble opinion, adds considerably to the charms of epic poetry.

We who live in the happy nineteenth century, and are only now awaking from a long and prosperous peace, if we judge by our own experience, can form no adequate idea of the state of society before, during, and after the era of this poem. Those were the days when truly might was right, when the laws were despised alike by prince and peasant, when the authority of the lord over his dependants was analogous to the same relations in Russia in our own day. It was then that the dearest rights of domestic felicity were by feudal law subjected to the will of the superior; it was then when the boasted Norman nobility shrunk not at deeds which make the blood run cold; it was in those days that the *noble, high-minded, chivalrous* Edward, meeting an unoffending Welch youth, caused his ear to be cut off, and his eye plucked out (*vide Woodward*), and filled his castles on the march with attendants, whose riotous licentiousness, and fearful cruelty, were even the disgrace of *that age*. It was in those days that in contemplating the miseries of his country, we read of a Bishop of Llandaff losing his sight through ceaseless weeping over the hapless fate of his generation, and of a Bishop of St. David's, who died of grief from the same cause. It was in those days that the ties of blood chained not the human heart to sympathy, and brother against brother, and sire against son, strove for the other's life. Surely, then, in contemplating this representation of society in the feudal times (and it is no exaggerated one), does not tragedy appear to be the natural vein in which to sing the scenes of those sad days? and the author dares to assert that the tone of the picture he has coloured, is only prevalent with its own deep sanguine hue. Thank God! those years are numbered with the past, and though the heart will sigh in contemplating our forefathers' lot, yet the knowledge of our present happy condition is only heightened by the fearful contrast.

Page 234. "Round Ramsey's isle," &c.

This island, situated at the promontory of St. David's, divided from the mainland by a rough and boisterous channel about one mile in width, forms the termination of the extreme west of Pembrokeshire; two considerable hills rise from it, the highest

of which is called the Choir. In early days some holy brethren made it their abode, though little or nothing remains of any sacred edifice. Here sleeps the imaginary Tewdwr Wylt, or "Tudor the Fierce." I have endeavoured to personate in his character the effect of ungovernable passions when excited by peculiar circumstances and serious wrongs, without the foundation of true religion for a support in the hour of need. It is true, he is at one time placed in the story, where it might be supposed that he would have ample opportunity to obtain such spiritual aid. Granted, but another object was also sought by me, viz.: to show how a pure and honourable-minded man might, on reflection, be led, influenced by the anomalies around him in the Roman Catholic Church, to regard the whole scheme of Christianity as a popular delusion. The state of this large portion of the Christian Church was then, as it is now, one vast system of hypocrisy, in which the actors often deceived themselves, under the idea that they were deceiving others. And the human mind, in detecting an error so gross, is often induced to regard the whole as spurious, forgetting that the precious metals are hidden in mountains of base earth.

If I have failed in my intention, pity, if you condemn me, gentle reader, and remember that—

"The quality of mercy is twice blest,
It blesseth him that gives, and *him that takes*."





